The International Crosby Circle Presents

BING

Edited by REG BRISTO

PALLADIUM-STYLE

Bing at his beloved Pebble Beach

JUNE 1976

NO 42

Published for the International Crosby Circle by REG BRISTO, 7, Greenmeadow Close, Gwent, NP4 3NR.

Original material (C) 1976.

We considered holding this issue over but finally decided that the next issue will be the "PALLADIUM" issue.

Warmest thanks to all contributors; and to those whose efforts do not appear, my regrets - and don't be discouraged! I've had to omit some regional notes but even so we feel we've gone some way to getting the proverbial gallon in a quart pot!

Members will be enjoying the new "Show Tunes" album with so many good things to savour on it. Keep the requests going to the BBC, local radio, &c.

Official organ of
THE INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE

BING

Hon. President.
BING CROSBY.

PUBLICITY OFFICERS:
Leslie Gaylor, 114 Medina Avenue, Newport, ISLE OF WIGHT.
Bob Roberts, 56 Thorold Rd., Chatham, KENT.
Eric Crowder, 41 Seaburn Rd., Toton, NOTTINGHAM NG9 6HT.
Edw. T. Hale, 48 Highbury Hill, London, N5 1AP.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION: £1.80; US/Canada 5 dollars.
Australian, European members sterling equivalent.

FILM & TV CONSULTANTS:
Bert Bishop, "Tideway", Imperial Avenue, Maylandsea, CHELMSFORD, ESSEX.

Keith Parkinson, 55 Long Ridge, Rastrick, Brighouse, YORKS HD6 3RZ

ISSUE NO. 42

June, 1976

PRINCIPAL CONTENTS:

	Page		Page.
Editorial..	3.	Pictures:	37.
Keeping Track: Bert Bishop ..	5.	Meeting Bing - in Montreal; Jean-Paul Frereault..	39.
A Jewel of a Story.	12.	and Los Angeles; Dot Hardiman.	40.
A Letter from Rev. Michael Collins.	17.	American Clippings..	41.
Book Review: John Bignell ..	23.	Trading Post:	45.
ICC P e: The Editor.. ..	25.	Lines from Leslie (Gaylor).. .	48.
The New Album (London).. ..	28.	Readers' Letters (if space permits!).....	

EDITORIAL

There NEVER was a time like it! There never was a TIME like it...whichever way you read it, there never was! He's here...you've seen him in the papers, on the TV - what a wonderful piece of timing to put that Lovely Vera Lynn/Bing show on again three days after his arrival - on the radio, AND SOME OF YOU WILL HAVE SEEN HIM ON THE STAGE OF THE LONDON PALLADIUM by the time you're reading this! No sir, never a Crosby time like THIS! And now a few words to put you in the picture:

When the last issue of BING appeared there was a feeling in some quarters - because of what Bing had allegedly said to a reporter -that he was considering giving a concert for his "loyal British fans". No concrete news, however - yet several leading members thought it would be a good idea to get an estimate of our ticket requirements in case there was anything in this exciting possibility. We envisage - at the most - a single concert at the Albert Hall, or the Festival Hall...and that would have offered us a manageable exercise in tabulating our requirements.

Then, as a bolt from the blue, we read that story in practically all the National press about Bing actually doing a 2-weeks' engagement at the world's most famous variety theatre, the London Palladium!! We're reliably informed that within TWO DAYS of that story the Palladium had an avalanche of between 30 and 40 thousand letters descend on it! This justified to the hilt what we've said for years - that Bing has a tremendous following, commands affection and respect, almost universally from the British public - only a tiny number of which belongs to the ICC. - and that that public WANTED TO SEE HIM!

Our amazed delight at the news was tempered with considerable dismay. We were under no illusions at all as to what would happen when that story appeared. We took immediate, and urgent, steps to see that our members would at least achieve some priority in the allocation of tickets. Letters were sent to the Manager of the Palladium, and to the impressario named, Mr. Robert Paterson; prominent members within reach of London went personally to the Palladium to gain assurance that ICC letters would get a degree of priority - in accord with Bing's stated wishes. At the same time an urgent circular was sent to all those who had answered our last -issue invitation telling them to write to the Palladium and to mark their envelopes ICC.

One got the impression that for a week or so the Palladium seemed paralysed by what

had descended upon them - and let's not forget that they were already grappling with the JULIE ANDREWS appearance, no mean event for London either, preceding Bing by two weeks. Contemplating the piles of mail already there it is hardly surprising they were telling phone callers and people at the box office that all the seats were sold! and causing the utmost grief and dismay...and all this 3 months almost before the shows were scheduled!

Then the Palladium got to work...and thank Heaven, the tide had turned! Letters of anguish turned to letters of delight - both moods fully understandable. In fact, the tide turned so dramatically that the zealous people who - because they hadn't got their tickets by return of post! - applied again, and again (understandably) suddenly found they had a double ration. And to the nightmare already existing (we had oceans of mail who had no connection with the ICC) we found ourselves acting as "brokers" - putting the "have-nots" in touch with the "haves"!

Mind, not all members were zealous! They showed they were completely out of touch with the frenzy that had developed for we got letters which said "...hang on to a couple of tickets for me, though I may be on nightwork.." OR "..hold on to say six tickets for me in case, but I may be in Majorca...." Then there were those, 99 out of every 100, we think, who insisted they "must be in the front row, and must be in the middle of that row..."...and could they meet Bing afterwards, take him to dinner? And would he sign umpteen albums....I tell you, there never was a time LIKE this..... and that's more or less where we started. There was a cold time when we actually began to wish Bing wasn't coming to the Palladium! But, we shook off that heinous thought - and got stuck in again. Some, it seems, are going to be disappointed: that is grievous, BUT - WE DID OUR BEST considering we had no prior knowledge, no INKLING, until that story appeared in all the newspapers.

We're happy to extend our usual warm welcome to the following new members: Clare Buckeridge (London NW9); Rev. Michael Collins (Highgate); Arthur Delaney (Manchester); Mr. G.R.T.Evans (Willenhall); Jay Fenton (USA); Mrs. C.M.Gale (London N7); Mr. L.J. Garlinge (Deal); Mr. E. Hobbs (London E11); Mr. Stan Hobbs (Morden); Chas Hills (Catford); Mr. H. Holland (Bolton); Don Jones (Liss); R.S.Jones (Hebburn); Alex P. King (Salford); Stuart Lord (Australia); Thos. McLean (Edinburgh); Mrs. Eileen W. Mansfield (Romford); Peter Radlett (Hemel Hempstead); Miss Ros Roux (London, SW2); Sue Robson, (Milton Keynes); Stan Willcox (Leicester); Geoff White (Cromford); Arthur Waring (Middleton); Mrs. Anne Ward and her three genial friends! (Middleton); Mrs. Mary Whitaker and Ken (Leeds); Mary and Stan Woodford (Romford) and Mr. E.G.Allen (London, SW20) - all good enthusiasts judging by their friendly and interesting letters - and only space in this crowded issue (or the lack of it) prevents them appearing here. But, there's more time....

A TELEGRAM ON BEHALF OF ALL MEMBERS OF THE ICC WAS SENT TO BING AT THE LONDON PALLADIUM EARLY ON MONDAY, 21ST JUNE, WITH WARMEST GREETINGS FOR A WONDERFUL TWO-WEEKS ON THIS HISTORIC OCCASION.

MEMBERS ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO BOMBARD THE BBC AND THEIR LOCAL RADIO WITH REQUESTS FOR BING RECORDS: ESPECIALLY, PERHAPS, FROM THE TWO UNITED ARTISTS ALBUMS (GLOCCA MORRA MIGHT BE A GOOD BET, OR IF YOU GO FOR A SWINGER, CABARET or LOOKING AT YOU! BUT THERE'S PLENTY OF NUMBERS TO CHOOSE FROM - WE'RE DELIGHTED TO SAY.

ALMOST READY TO GO AHEAD PRINTING THE NEW EDITION OF THE LP-OGRAPHY WE'VE RUN INTO A SNAG - ITS TOO BIG TO BE STAPLED AND WE ARE INVESTIGATING OTHER METHODS OF BINDING THE VOLUME. REST ASSURED, WE WILL PROCEED AS SOON AS THIS IS SOLVED. ALL MEMBERS, AND ESPECIALLY THE NEW ONES, ARE REMINDED THEIR VIEWS, COMMENTS, CRITICISMS, MEMORIES, FAVOURITE CROSBY STORIES, NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS, &C. ARE CORDIALLY WELCOMED!

KEEPING TRACK

of the new tracks by BING...

and our guide, as always, the redoubtable

BERT BISHOP

In the last issue of this magazine, Editor Reg made note of the fairly comprehensive collation of new releases featured within these columns. That we do indeed have a pretty good round-up of what is new on record by Bing is due entirely to members who are kind enough to send me details of discs outside the normal UK origin and retail distribution.

In this respect, particular thanks go to Colin Pugh, of Bristol, and Ken Gray in the States, both ICC stalwarts as most will know. That the major UK record companies are also very co-operative, working through their and our Press/Publicity Officers, makes the presentation of the quarterly compilation of the latest of Bing on record an almost 100 per cent enumeration - and for me, an engaging task. Here then, for your delectation and to keep you right in the picture, is the latest round-up. There are also, of course, a few personal reviews that are not always a majority opinion! And, who would have it otherwise?

AT MY TIME OF LIFE/CHILDREN United Artists UP36078 UK 7" 45rpm (1976) Stereo:

First on the turntables for this year was the new 'single' which couples two titles from the musical production of Charles Dickens's "GREAT EXPECTATIONS", and which Bing recorded in Los Angeles with an arrangement, and orchestra conducted, by Pete Moore: production by Ken Barnes.. A triumvirate of talent which could hardly fail to please; though one must consider the selection of material which, in this instance, is two songs by Hal Shaper and Cyril Ornadel.

The "A" side of this single is not an outstanding lyric by any means; it is a rather run-of-the-mill musical philosophy which gives the impression that 'I've heard that song before'. Not matching THAT'S WHAT LIFE IS ALL ABOUT, for example. It is, of course, boosted by the artistes involved and whilst Bing's interpretation is eminently listenable it is the musical backing that holds dominance and marginally comes away with the musical honours. By now, we are accustomed to the lush, yet full-bodied, Pete Moore orchestrations and I particularly like the impressive swelling sound of the full line-up in the third 'eight' which leads Bing into full-bore re-entry on the chorus repeat, and the pregnant pause in the backing whilst Bing sings the title line again before the grand finale. A marginal balance in favour of BING in relation to the orchestra could have been advantageous. Certainly Bing is in there strong, rich and clear, even if the lyric is, as I've suggested, somewhat mediocre for an "A" side though the melody and range suit him well.

It would be unfair to the entire production team to state that Bing easily steals the honours with the "B" side, CHILDREN. By his suffused, warm and expressive lyrical interpretation he completely overshadows the orchestra. But surely, that must have been the intent....an accompaniment of unobtrusive elegance and good taste which the lyric demands, and gets. Once the opulence of the musical introduction is over it is Bing all the way in an endearing song that is almost a soliloquy. The song is modern - words and music - with something to say without being repetitive and trite, and it suits Bing as though it were written for him. The timbre of his voice, especially in the lower register, reverberates as richly as ever, reminding me of the 1960 recording of THE MUSIC OF HOME. I like here, too, the echoed sentiments of the orchestra and the short cello solo. The entire arrangement, though subservient, is complementary and complimentary to Bing - perhaps this is what Reg was sermonising on in the last issue apropos SOUTHERN MEMOIR! This arrangement takes nothing from Bing, and gives him all. Metaphorically speaking this is a low-key track that amply illustrates Bing's supreme ability with the opposite end to the up-tempo tunes...if any such illustration was needed. What a lovely start to 1976 recordings!

WHERE THE BLUE OF THE NIGHT MEETS THE GOLD OF THE DAY. MCA RECORDS. MFP 50249 UK LP STEREO.

Yes, you're right - this album, a latecomer for the March issue, was comprehensively reviewed by Editor Reg with interesting and pertinent comparison with the SOUTHERN MEMOIR collection. However, an intriguing discographical and commercial anomaly was evident by the inclusion of the 1931 title track to introduce this 1957-recorded collection, particularly as the early track is Decca copyright and the MFP label is an offshoot of EMI. Enquiry along these lines led to the fact that an "administrative error" resulted in the strange juxtaposition of eras (1931/1945) and that the version of OLD BLUE intended was the 1945 John Scott Trotter accompanied one....a far more sensible opener if the original NEW TRICKS was to be tampered with. If, however, there is ever a reprint of MFP 50249 the correct version of WHERE THE BLUE OF THE NIGHT is almost certain to be used. So, there's one for label collectors! And it should be added, altogether apart from this side-slip, the album was a most welcome and popular issue.

THE ADVENTURES OF TOM SAWYER Decca Records Argo ZSW 561-3 UK 3-LP Stereo (£6.90)
K3K 34 Tape/Stereo (£7.50)

All who read Bing's transcribed message for the ICC's 25th Anniversary get-together at Leeds will be aware that Decca are producing well-loved stories read by famous personalities. In this respect, I can think of no better combination than Bing and the famous Mark Twain characters and their derring-do's. It was certainly a coup by Decca to recapture Bing for the reading, and in this American Bi-Centennial Anniversary year such an album should rate a good seller. The three LPs come as a boxed set with a descriptive four-page booklet concerning Mark Twain and his story, Bing Crosby - the actor, and the music.

> The story is an edited version undertaken by Dillon Usill and produced and recorded by Kevin Daly at the Argo Studios, Fulham Road, London... a long way from St. Petersburg and the Mississippi!

The box features a VERY nice photograph of Bing seated in an armchair, with the large nook open on his knees. He is looking into the camera in the most engaging manner, just as if he were reading - which, of course, he may have been. The construction of the box is considered standard, but I find it rather flimsy by earlier standards. However, it is the content as always that matters most, and in this respect one can scarcely fault the production in any way.

We all know Bing to be a particularly good reader, a faculty first developed at college which was the basis for all the subsequent diction we forever talk about. The naturalness of his delivery of lines and his interest in words, and literature in general, has been the keynote of success not only in singing but in every theatrical medium. What expression there is here! It is no mean feat to bring instant recognition of characters in written conversation that does not always name names. Yet at all times one is aware who is supposed to be speaking without Bing resorting to an actual change of accent. Bing's rich tones have never been heard to better dramatic effect in such a unique - and marathon - effort.

And what drama he brings to the story! There are some sound effects, created by Geoff. Milne and Peter Handford, but they are very low-key for the most part, except for a well-produced studio thunderstorm, almost half-hearted one might say, and it is continually apparent that Bing could have carried the story without them. That is not to disparage them entirely; the sounds of children at play, gurgling rivers and the echoing drip of water when Tom and Becky are lost in the caves do create at atmosphere of time and place. But Tom and Huckleberry Finn in the churchyard at midnight is almost a solo effort to which Bing brings quite a chilling eeriness.

Some concessions to modern thinking have been made, which may be considered to be historically unfair; but if there had to be abridgement of the book then all oblique references to coloured slavery that existed at the time were a natural source of contraction. One cannot alter history, the finger having writ, but the producers have neatly sidestepped the trendy, accusing finger and cries of 'racialists' for themselves

- and Bing in this way. It demeans the story only slightly. It must be said, too, that three hours listening time is not often available at one session - which is what this set requires - but the enjoyment can actually be increased by, say, listening to one record per evening. Listening by instalments, as it were, also adds to the effect by anticipation; no "cliff-hanger" suspense has been attempted, of course, at the conclusion of any of the 3 LPs.

> The music for the story is confined to "natural breaks" and consists of the harmonica, mainly, with guitar, banjo and harr ium in support. The harmonica is played by Tommy Reilly well-known for his own recordings; the music was composed by his son, David. And well-written it is - truly evocative of the era and certainly played with a feeling for the times by a master musician.

And mention of "master" brings us back again to Bing. How unique a man he is, as we are wont to remark, to have so much talent that however he uses his voice it is sheer entertainment. Disregarding any aspects of collecting almost for its own sake, no true appreciator of the voice of Bing Crosby could possibly pass up the opportunity to own for listening pleasure this remarkable set.

"STARS AND STRINGS" Polydor 2482 268

Side Two, track one, features the Bing with Bregman title CHEEK TO CHEEK. The remainder of this LP is non-Bing.

"CONNIE BOSWELL" MCA MCFM 2739 (UK) £2.90

Side One features BETWEEN 18th AND 19TH CHESTNUT ST (track 7) and YES, INDEED! (track 8). The remainder of this twenty-track LP is entirely the famous Boswell Sisters and Connee Boswell solo. Certainly a good album for Boswell fans - and there are many of them - with the tracks dating from around 1935-36. There are comprehensive sleeve notes by Michael Brooks; but the sleeve is a badly designed conglomeration of colours.

BING CROSBY "ON THE AIR" TOTEM LP 1022 (Canadian)

Kraft Music-Hall 27th May, 1937: Bing with the Jimmy Dorsey Orchestra:

Side One:
How Could You?
My Melancholy Baby.
You're Here, You're There.
Land of the Sky.
Blue Water.
Time on my Hands.

Side Two:
My Little Buckeroo.
Forgotten Waltz.
Port of the Wine.
Lullaby for Bazooka.
Flight of the Bumble Bee.
Where are You?

This is a fairly good fidelity album of Bing from an era not readily available on tape - let alone LP. The pre-John Scott Trotter era...the material is a mixture of vocals and orchestral items, with Ken Carpenter and the inevitable Bob Burns never far away - Bob with the bizarre "musical " instrument featured on No. 4 of side 2. The usual gold-coloured sleeve carries a large outline drawing of Bing on the front cover, with three blue on white photographs on the rear sleeve showing Bing with the orchestra and the two aforementioned regulars. One imagines the jazz devotees of Dobells and other jazz haunts will want this record too - for Jimmy Dorsey!

AROUND THE WORLD WITH BING CROSBY. Decca DL 8687 U.S.

This LP constitutes a reissue of the original Decca version that carries the same catalogue number. Titles overleaf:

Side One: Around the World.
Quizas, Quizas, Quizas.
I Love Paris.
Liebchen.
In a little Spanish Town.
Galway Bay.

Side Two: Tobermory Bay.
Bali Ha'i.
Shanghai.
Beyond the Reef.
Vaya Con Dios.
Mississippi Mud.

SONGS EVERYBODY KNOWS. DE 74415 (Stereo) US.

Another re-issue; this time a stereo version of US Decca DL4415 which was the American equivalent of NEW TRICKS on Brunswick LAT8217. A complete album here, with no substitutes. The front of the sleeve lists the title contents and features a pencil sketch of Bing, head and shoulders. Gilbert Millstein is responsible for the write-up on the rear sleeve, and these notes date from the album's conception in 1957.

ROBERTO CLEMENTO MEMORIAL ALBUM Triple-B T-1001 US.

Here we have an LP dedicated to the memory of a Pittsburgh Pirates baseball player - a team with which Bing has been concerned with for many years. There are comments by many well-known personalities including Bing and ex-President Richard Nixon. The entire album is rather complicated....particularly the sleeve which carries a photograph of Clemento and one of Bing. Art Benning has written a miniscule "life story" of the baseball star, and it is featured on the rear of this mainly light brown sleeve. Of collectors' interest only this side of the Atlantic. We still have to "convert" our American friends to cricket and soccer - and perhaps a big step was taken in regard to the latter with the Bi-Centennial tournament held there in May/June this year when Don Revie and the full England team appeared in the States.

THE GREATEST OF AL JOLSON Telehouse P2-12668 (CD-2036) US 2-LP Set. (A Columbia Products Album. Manufactured by CBS Records; courtesy of MCA)

Individual record nos: P12669 Side 2: Track 2 ALEXANDER'S RAGTIME BAND. P12670 non-Bing.

A nice album for "Jolie" fans; but only the one Bing featured track. Surprising, perhaps for the Al-Bing duet of THE SPANIARD WHO BLIGHTED MY LIFE would have been the expected title.

THOSE WONDERFUL GUYS AND GALS OF STAGE, SCREEN AND RADIO. Columbia Special Products P4-12964 US 4-LP Boxed Set.

Individual record nos: P12967, Side 2, track 1: SNUGGLED ON YOUR SHOULDER.
P12965/6/8 non-Bing.

Forty "stars" are featured on these four LPs and they are all given a write-up by Larry Carr in a four-page leaflet that comes with the album. A photograph of each one in a small circle forms the fronispiece of the all-black box.

THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF CHRISTMAS. Capitol Special Marketing SL8000 US.

Side One: Track 5. WHAT CHILD IS THIS?/THE HOLLY AND THE IVY.

This, the first-listed of a number of Christmas albums, is another "all-star" compilation of Yuletide tracks. A seasonal scene of skaters and horse-drawn sleighs by way of a coloured drawing forms the front sleeve cover, with the rear of the sleeve featuring pictures of the nine "stars" participating.

CHRISTMAS WITH THE STARS Capitol Special Marketing SL6931 US.

Side One: track 3: HARK THE HERALD ANGELS SING/IT CAME UPON A MIDNIGHT CLEAR (medley)

Eight artistes on this album, all featured on the front cover surrounding an indoor Christmas scene pictured in modern art form. Bing's tracks date from 1962 as in SL8000.

A CHRISTMAS MUSIC FESTIVAL Capitol Creative Products SL 6688 US.

Side Two: Track 5: DO YOU HEAR WHAT I HEAR?.

Bing with the Ralph Carmichael Chorus and Orchestra in this pleasant '63 recording. His photograph appears on the rear sleeve along with the other seven featured artistes. Again an indoor scene - opening presents round a fireside - brightens the LP's face.

GREAT SONGS OF CHRISTMAS RCA Special Products DPL1-0148 US.

Side Two: Track 7: A CHRISTMAS TOAST.

Finally, the most recent of Bing's Christmas songs, recorded with musical director Les Brown and The Voices of Christmas in 1971, and taken from the album entitled A TIME TO BE JOLLY. Perhaps the selection of this title is contentious for a GREAT SONGS collection. Some uncredited notes accompany photographs of the 13 featured stars on the rear of the sleeve.

THE ORIGINAL HIT PERFORMANCES - THE LATE THIRTIES. Decca DL4000 US

Side Two, Track 5: PENNIES FROM HEAVEN (with Georgie Stoll Orchestra, 1936)
Track 6: SWEET LEILANI.

American Decca continue to pick out selected songs of an era from their archives. Similar LPs starring Bing have already been released by them in the States, and in the UK by Brunswick. Here we have an "official" Gold Record (million-seller) and another that must also have sold well over that figure, surely? So many must indeed have passed that figure in those far-off days when imprecise records were kept of sales.

GUY LOMBARDO - "SEEMS LIKE OLD TIMES" Pickwick SPC 3530 Stereo US.

Side One: YOUNG AT HEART.

From YOUNG & HEALTHY recorded in 1933 with this outfit, a twenty-one year jump to the title presented indicates the enduring popularity of the Lombardo style, still going strong incidentally. This is a very nice Bing track, suggesting that he would have been well advised to have cut a few more tracks with America's King of Sweet Music; or shall we say America's Maurice Winnick! As inferred, YOUNG AT HEART was made in 1954.

MARLENE DIETRICH LIVE Wildebeest Maclon 5290 (Amalgamated) US.

Side Two, Track 7: LA VIE EN ROSE (duet). A non-commercial track dating from 1952 radio and previously released on Star-Tone ST-205.

KAY THOMPSON REVIEWS Ultimo Kayt 406 (Amalgamted) US.

(Cont. over

Side Two features six separately tracked titles which are believed to come from PHILCO RADIO TIME of 12 November, 1947. They are as follows:

1. Where the Blue of the Night (introduction).
2. Now Soon? (Bing solo)
3. Intro. of Kay Thompson and Williams Bros.
4. Jubilee Time (Bing and guests, with dialogue)
5. Blue Hawaii (Parody and introduction of Peter Lorre).
6. Aintcha ever comin' Back, Aintcha? (Bing solo).

There follows a few re-releases of popular US albums:

FINIAN'S RAINBOW: Reprise FS-2015 Stereo.
SONG HITS FROM BROADWAY SHOWS Decca DL 5000 (10")
COWBOY SONGS VOL. 1 Decca DL 5107 (10")
THE HAPPY PRINCE/THE SMALL ONE. Decca DL6000 (10")

It only remains to be said, for the benefit of newer/younger members, who may be studying the above somewhat aghast at what they are missing, or should be getting - and how to pay for them! - it must be pointed out that when "US" appears in the heading it indicates that the albums have been reissued, or issued, in AMERICA and are, in most cases, not obtainable in Britain. Often there is a parallel issue in Britain with a different number - but not always. Where this does happen, it is indicated. The large number of albums of "collections" needs a word of explanation too, perhaps. It will be seen that in these cases, the one, or two, Bing tracks are given as forming part of a miscellaneous album. Tracks not by Bing are shewn "Non-Bing"; this should in no way be taken as criticism of the albums in question but merely that for the purpose of this review, they are irrelevant.

It might be added, also, in this connection that few average collectors will want to go to the expense of buying albums for the sake of just one Bing track when, forsooth, they already have the number on other records. There ARE collectors - label collectors, for example - who will want these records and they are included for the sake of completeness and accuracy.

Something else to say too in relation to KEEPING TRACK; we have been hanging on by our finger-tips, as it were, waiting for the second United Artists album - SHOW TUNES - by Bing, Pete, and Ken. As it will almost certainly be in the shops before this issue is completed mention will be found of it elsewhere. And that's not all! Consider this item from RECORD WEEKLY! :

COMPANIES PLAN MAJOR CROSBY EVENT

London is likely to come highly Bing Crosby-conscious during his fortnight appearance at the Palladium which opens next month. Both Decca and United Artists are planning campaigns to promote his back catalogue and UA is releasing a new album produced by KEN BARNES and with the PETE MOORE ORCHESTRA, "AT MY TIME OF LIFE" (MAS-29956) The theme of the UA promotion is to be IT DON'T MEAN A THING IF IT AIN'T GOT THAT BING, a catchphrase dreamed up by company of popular music ALAN WARNER which will be seen on the sides of 400 LONDON BUSES and featured on badges and other advertising material. This will be the first time that Crosby has performed in concert in the UK and only the second time that he has given a live performance in the world. Said Warner: "Plans are afoot to ensure that this is one of the biggest events in London for some time". Promotor Robert Paterson is arranging a number of social events to coincide with the artist's celebration of 50 years as a recording artist (last year he celebrated 50 years in entertainment He is now 75.

There are also plans to tie in the American Bi-Centenary celebrations with Crosby's

visit as he is generally considered to be the most institutional figure in the US. In this respect, UA is involved in discussions with the American Tourist office and has offered display material on both Crosby and Astaire who is in this country for the opening of THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT Part 2.

Warner also revealed that there are plans for Fred Astaire and Crosby to record an album together for UA. A single THE ONLY WAY TO GO, by Tim Rice and Marvin Hamlich is also to be released to help promotion of the album.

Decca will also be doing some consumer press advertising for Bing Crosby albums in its catalogue, to tie-in with the singer's Palladium concerts. They include the recent Vocalion reissue, MANY HAPPY RETURNS, A SOUTHERN MEMOIR (recorded by Crosby last year) and a three-album box set of Crosby reading TOM SAWYER.

EDW. HALE

It all sounds most exciting! Especially for Londoners with all those hundreds of red buses emblazoned with the name of BING! It'll be worth a trip or two just to see this historic event! The reference to only the second time Bing has performed live is, I feel, stretching things a bit. No doubt they refer to the Paramount appearances in 1931....but all Bing's radio programmes had an audience; he sang to an audience every night in the Cocoanut Grove; he's been on scores of TV spectaculars, including those over here. So how come "second live performance"? They obviously mean a theatrical engagement. Films and radio of course claimed all Bing's attention almost throughout his career.

The material that Decca will be publicising is "old hat" to us, of course - but good must surely come out of it? If all this publicity works - and frankly, after the phenomenal response to the Palladium "affair" one asks again, does Bing NEED publicity? - but if there is a new impetus, Decca has vast quantities of Bing material that can be shewn the light of day again. There could be a record-resurgence that would delight even the most conservative of us..... one can only weakly ask: WHERE'S IT ALL GONNA END?

Members, especially those not in the UK, are invited to send news and details of any records of Bing issued in their countries which they feel are of special interest, e.g. they have probably not been issued elsewhere, to BERT BISHOP (address at the front of the magazine) so that our coverage may be even more complete.

One of our keen members (pardon me, they're ALL keen, yes!) TREVOR WAGSTAFF (Hornchurch, Essex) puts forward the idea that we should make a special effort with DJ's, producers, reviewers, &c., to get Bing's records played on the air. Well, of course, scores of our members are doing this all the time - with great success it might be added. National and local radio stations are presenting a fair selection of Bing - witness the Champion of them all - LESLIE GAYLOR! Trevor's idea was for some of the lesser-known - but often truly great - Bing tracks to get on the air again. Sadly, it has to be said that the people referred to - DJs &c - do not seem prepared to dip into the library, or the archives for the older numbers and take the easy way out by playing the record nearest to hand. So often I've heard such a record-player say: "....has asked for Bing's FOR LOVE ALONE, but to cover so and so, and so-and-so, we're playing THAT'S WHAT LIFE IS ALL ABOUT instead...we hope it will be just as acceptable..." Still, old and new, let's keep up our efforts to keep Bing's voice resounding on the air-waves. I reckon we're going to hear a lot of the new album - the show tunes one, with GLOCCA MORRA in it! If its as great as Les Gaylor swears it is, let's go after that for broadcasting - along with all the others!

A JEWEL OF A STORY

"BING, THE LONG, LONG ROAD" SUNDAY TIMES May 2nd, 1976.

Bing never has, and never is, out of the papers for long even after the long, long road. But allowing for this, however, there was quite a remarkable, in-depth article on Bing in the august pages of the SUNDAY TIMES of May 2. This is one of the "quality" papers - that's how it views itself, I am certain, and at 16p a copy, we're not going to attempt to refute that assessment. Certainly not, in any case, the issue referred to. It seems the author, DEREK JEWELL, actually went to America to get the basis of his story - and of course, to see Bing. Mr. Jewell has long been known to many members of the ICC, but for a very different reason than his Crosby-affiliation.

But honour should, and must be done. This story - it is hoped a large number of our members saw it - was first-class and one that avoided the usual mundanities that most journalists (and radio interviewers) inflict on Bing. It was, indeed, a story acceptable to even the most sophisticated of Crosby admirers. With grateful acknowledgements to Mr. Jewell and the SUNDAY TIMES we think it a good idea to reproduce some of the more trenchant passages of the article which covered the entire front page of that newspaper's WEEKLY REVIEW supplement, as well as more than a third of page 2. The article, furthermore, was adorned with an excellent montage of Bing pictures, showing the maestro thro' all the decades, from the Thirties to the Seventies. An introductory note to the story read:

> "Next month, Bing Crosby who long since travelled the Road to Singapore, Zanzibar, Morocco and Hong Kong, finally takes the Road to London: to sing surprisingly for the first time on the West End stage. Today is his birthday, his 72nd not his 75th - that, he says, is a fabrication of Bob Hope's - but either way it is an unusual age for a London debut. In this, the first of two articles about contrasting singers, DEREK JEWELL talks to Bing at his Mexican retreat."

Other extracts were:

> "Bing Crosby, whose voice has been heard more often by more people than that of any mortal in history, sings less for the world than he used to. But that, like the style in which he lives, is through choice rather than necessity.....
>
> "There's a house on the outskirts of Guadalajara (pop. 1,200,000) in Mexico whose walls are regularly washed by the gentle Crosby tones - usually, he confesses, the songs of John McCormack, rather than 'White Christmas' - since that is where, for two months each year, he quietly takes his ease.....a lot of people in Guadalajara know him and he's much involved in supporting good causes there as elsewhere.....The trouble with Crosby, and the Parthenon or Everest, or the British Museum, is that they've been around for so long they get taken for granted. We forget what life might have been like without them. Without Bing Crosby, less tuneful, less funny, less benign."

I feel Mr. Jewell hit on a profound truth there. Life without Bing? One cannot really imagine it. Happily, we've never had to. But let's press on to an even more profound and palpably true aspect recorded by Derek Jewell:

> "THE LEGEND, HOWEVER, DISGUISES AS MUCH AS IT REVEALS, AND AFTER 50 YEARS IT'S TIME FOR OWNING UP. BING CROSBY—JUST IN CASE LONGEVITY, HIS KNACK OF UNOBTRUSIVENESS AND SHEER FAMILIARITY HAVE OBSCURED THE FACT—IS ARGUABLY THE MOST INFLUENTIAL SINGER OF OUR CENTURY AND PROBABLY (SINCE POP IS THE MOST PRACTISED ART FORM) ITS MOST SINGLE INFLUENTIAL ARTIST IN ANY CATEGORY. HE CREATED A NEW, PERSONAL VOCAL IDIOM WHICH IS STILL BEING COPIED. TO ACHIEVE THIS, HE HAD HIS SHARE OF LUCK; BUT HE ALSO

MANAGED, IN THE FIRST 25 YEARS OF HIS CAREER ESPECIALLY, A FEROCIOUS WORK-RATE WHICH CARRIED HIM THROUGH THE RECORDING OF 4,000 SONGS. EVEN TODAY, HE WORKS ONE-THIRD OF EVERY YEAR WHICH, 'AT 71 AIN'T EXACTLY RETIRED'."

A ferocious work-rate, especially if it is added that Bing was on the radio all thro' that 25 years referred to - and also took part in a few films! These are things we often point out in BING; how refreshing that at last a national newspaper has got around to pointing them out. To Derek Jewell again, quoting Bing:

"I used to listen to those trained singers, really forcing for volume and high notes and I just couldn't understand what they were saying. I sure hated that. I wanted to sing conversationally, to reach people with the meaning."

Thus the reason why Bing did not lift his chin to an unnatural angle, throw back his shoulders and roar out the baritone arias we all know he could. And also the reason why Bing describes himself as a "phraser" rather than a singer; he wanted us to know what the song was saying. And with his youthful addiction to elocution we have the complete answer to the faultless phrasing and the equally faultless diction we have lauded so long. Mind you, we can permit ourselves a quiet smile when we think of that gloriously unique timbre when listening to Bing talking about being a "phraser" and not a singer. As a matter of fact, we often listen to faultless diction - listen to the BBC announcers! - and some excellent phrasers. But curiously, they don't sound like Bing! Bing again, talking to Mr. Jewell:

"For phrasing, for taste, jazz was the start of me. When I went out with Whiteman and ended up as one of the Rhythm Boys, well, I COULD SING EVERY NOTE OF THOSE TRAM (TRUMBAUER) AND BIX CHORUSES. THAT'S WHERE I LEARNED TO BE EASY - JAZZ SOLOS, ESPECIALLY SLOW, ARE LIKE A KIND OF CONVERSATION."

You know, this story is of particular interest to me for several reasons - the main one I will come to eventually, but for now older readers may remember that some years back I did a fairly long series of articles under the headings of "Bing - the Phraser"; "Bing, the Whistler", "Bing - the Narrator", "Bing - the balladeer", "Bing - The Jazz Singer" and several other similar headings. In the last-named I pointed out Bing's tendency to "sing" scat-fashion a Bix phrase, or one perpetrated by some other renowned jazz instrumentalist. I know I wasn't alone in detecting this facet of the Crosby art; but it IS nice to have it all confirmed by Bing.

To another telling passage:

"....Bing's mixture of talent and ordinariness arrived just when the Western world started wanting heroes it could relate to rather than flamboyant untouchables. Bing was one of the first anti-heroes. 'He has emerged as a figure that is often affectionately regarded as the ideal American male,' Whitney Balliett wrote in 1953. 'If, in a larger sense, the bigger-than-life common man is a new figure to the world and is the century's hero, Bing may also be one of the first of the Universal Common Men."

Hmmm...mebbe...mebbe not, to coin a phrase! Perhaps that's a more subtle way of saying what we hear so often - Bing himself perpetuates it, too - that all men think they can sing like him - in the bathroom! Perhaps, too, it means that Bing has never acted in his life, despite those films. He just played himself.....

"There were no mikes in those days,' said Bing, "so you had to belt it out to audiences of up to maybe 2,000. One week in New York I played eight shows a day, rushing between the Brooklyn and the mid-town Paramount theatres courtesy of the subway, getting on at 42nd Street. I couldn't sing for a week after that...."

Well, we just said Bing COULD belt it out if he had to, or wanted to....but thank

goodness the microphone did come along; there can be little doubt that the voice wouldn't have lasted until 1976 if it hadn't!

> "The man who massaged the incipient Crosby talent in the 1930's was a businessman - Jack Kapp, boss of Decca Records - who encouraged Bing to become the singer reflecting all possible musical tastes. 'He got me to do everything in those ten years or so - blues, ballads, patriot, country and western, hymns Protestant and Catholic, recitations, Strauss waltzes. And the people I got together with, too. You know, duets with Jolson and Judy Garland and Satchmo, too many to remember. Singing with the Mormon Choir. Chalisapin on my radio show. Jack even pulled in Jascha Heifitz to record with me - WHERE MY CARAVAN HAS RESTED - can you imagine that? Today I don't even remember the tune'."

And:

> "His hits became the eloquent medium of the hopes, nightmares and fantasies of the years he lived through. The love songs have been the accompaniment to courting, marriage, farewells, reunions, deaths of damn-near everyone in the English-speaking world over forty. WHITE CHRISTMAS, with all-time record sales of over 30 million, turned accidentally into the greatest nostalgic anthem of one major war and then, unendingly, of the peace and smaller wars which followed it.."

Then: "He still looks little more than 50, and in his warm unspoiled fashion acts precisely as you'd expect of a man about whom a fine critic, Henry Pleasants, wrote: 'WHEN WE HEAR BING CROSBY, WE HEAR THE VOICE OF AN OLD AND TREASURED FRIEND.'"

> "It is absurd, of course, that he is only now making his London debut at the Palladium: we can't count the incident during the bombing of London in the war when the police, worried about the crowd outside a Soho restaurant, asked him to sing to persuade them to disperse. He gave them PENNIES FROM HEAVEN. No engagement has been so important to him in his whole life, he says.....
>
> "He reflected a bit more, his mind back on the show....'I think I ought to come on right at the start of the show, don't you? Its a real pain for people waiting through the whole first half to see the guy they've come to see...."

That is precisely the way we would expect Bing to think. It is precisely what we want, too!

These are, as mentioned earlier, merely some of the more interesting and important extracts from what was, as will be appreciated, a very fine article on Bing calculated to impress even the most jaded Crosby-admirers who felt they had seen - and read - it all. We congratulate Mr. Jewell on a fine - and penetrating - story.

And, having said which - and not wishing to introduce a sour note -Derek Jewell is well known to several of our readers who have been, perhaps sardonically, rather irked at his past almost unbelievable adulation of another singer! I have several stories on file....that of Ken Crossland of Ossett, once of Leeds (and let's offer belated congratulations to Ken who was married around the middle of May - he kept THAT very quiet. If it wasn't for changing his address I doubt whether we would have known even now!)

Ken certainly took umbrage with Mr. Jewell; unlike the older members who often mentioned Mr. Jewell's outpourings, he found he couldn't read them with a mixture of irksomeness

and tolerant amusement! Ken got tired of turning the other cheek, as it were, and after one near-nauseating article about a certain singer who shall be nameless (!) he wrote to the SUNDAY TIMES as follows:

Dear Sir,

To suggest that Frank Sinatra has been "THE voice by which a generation lived, and sometimes died" (Derek Jewell, Weekly Review June 1 1975) sounds like something from a Sinatra press release rather than a conclusion based upon a study of the development of popular music. One man has towered above all other popular singers of this century, and that man is Bing Crosby. He alone brought popular singing in line with the 20th century, liberating it from the stiff phrasing of the Twenties.

Moreover, Crosby has maintained his position against all-comers. The statistics are well known, and need not be dwelled upon here. What must be said, however, is that Crosby alone had the inimitable voice, had and still has, a richness of tone which makes Sinatra appear harsh and artificial, and an artistry which concealed the art. As Sammy Davis, a man who has impersonated both in his stage act, has said: 'when it comes to popular singers, with due respect to Frank, Dean, Como et al, you must say "There's Bing - and then there's everybody else"!

Yours faithfully,
Ken Crossland, ICC.

Pretty well said by Ken, wasn't it? Needless to say, his letter did NOT appear in the SUNDAY TIMES - but he did get a personal reply, which read as follows:

Dear Mr. Crossland,

Thank you so much for your letter about Bing Crosby, which has been passed to me by The Sunday Times.

I think that any judgement between the merits of Crosby and Sinatra (both of whom I like) is bound to be open to endless dispute. I would simply claim that so far as the generation who lived between 1940 and 1970 in their adulthood was concerned, the voice they thought of as typical of their era, expressing its hopes, fears and ambitions, the name would be Sinatra rather than Crosby.

That is a personal judgement, it is true, but it is based upon a study of popular music in all its facets - by an independent witness rather than by someone whose opinion, I think you will admit, is bound to be somewhat swayed by the very organisation to which you belong.

Yours sincerely,

DEREK JEWELL.

As you will see, this correspondence is now almost a year old - and believe me, wouldn't have seen the light of day in these pages but for the new approach to Bing that Mr. Jewell undoubtedly shows a year later! Incidentally, I feel that apart from any other consideration, Mr. Jewell made a fundamental error in his last paragraph to Ken Crossland. He suggests, inter alia, that Ken favours the Crosby cause because he belongs to the International Crosby Circle. But, of course, Ken BELONGS to the International Crosby Circle because he favoured the Crosby cause!

(Cont...

What a difference a year made, we might claim.....but wait! It wasn't a year, for earlier this year Mr. Jewell wrote such a panegyric about a certain singer who shall be nameless (well, I'm trying!) that the following letters appear in - yes - THE SUNDAY TIMES the following Sunday:

SINATRA'S WAY ISN'T MY WAY.

Can anyone explain why Frank Sinatra is still considered by many to be the ultimate in the crooner stakes? Derek Jewell's droolings (Art Nov. 16) have finally prompted me to make some protest against this hero-worship of a "voice" which, to me, is quite abhorrent. There is something repugnant about the mass adulation of someone who in my opinion is, and always has been, a very third-rate singer. Am I alone in the wilderness? If so, I would still have to be convinced that I am wrong. May I stress that I have no objection to Frank Sinatra as a person.

E.C.Jones, (Hants).

Now, I don't know Mr. Jones of Hants - and he certainly isn't a member of the ICC. And as this was the first merest of a whisper against the consistent Sinatra-lauding that The Sunday Times had permitted itself, I was aghast at the thought of the mysterious Mr. Jones feeling he was alone in his heresy. So, I took pen in hand and addressed myself to the Editor of that same paper as follows:

Sir,

The letter from Mr. E.C.Jones in LETTERS last week was highly evocative of the lovely story of the little boy who remained impervious to brain-washing and, far from joining in the sycophantic chorus of praise at the Emperor's new clothes, had the temerity to point out that his Majesty was in fact wearing no clothes at all. Mr. Jones took on the role of the brain-unwashed-boy, I feel, when he wrote that Sinatra is, and always has been, a very third-rate singer.

I can assure Mr. Jones he is not alone in his assessment; I heartily endorse his view and remain as puzzled as he obviously is at the stupefying adulation heaped on this performer's head. As a matter of interest, if it wasn't for the equally stupefying fact that dear old Bing Crosby sounds little different today from what he did 35 years ago I would seriously suspect that my hearing wasn't what it was when reading some of these Sinatra eulogies.

If Derek Jewell had been lauding - though NOT drooling over - the peerless Bing it would have been so much more acceptable - and understandable.

Thank you, Mr. Jones. Thank goodness someone has said it.

REG BRISTO.

Mind you, I didn't expect this letter to find its way into the august columns of the Sunday Times so it was with some surprise that I received a letter in a couple of days from the Editor which read:

Dear Mr. Bristo,

I am pleased to tell you that your letter has been selected provisionally for publication in our correspondence columns. Some judicious editing of it may be necessary for a number of reasons, the most pressing usually being our limited space. At this stage, of course, we can give no guarantee of publication, but in any event, thank you for writing.

Yours sincerely, for the EDITOR.

Now for the dramatic denouement to this saga of correspondence - but perhaps you have guessed? You're right - my letter was NOT published after all!

It must be stressed again that this S..... v C..... subject would NOT have seen the light of day in these pages in the normal way. We think it decidedly fatuous to offer any comparison between them on any grounds. Not only that, its a free country, so they say! The reason these things, which have been on the file for ages with us, are now published is that they may help to keep the new Crosby article by Mr. Jewell in some sort of perspective. It was a professional article, executed in professional style - by a professional. And there was a trip to Mexico involved.

> We may all sleep securely in our beds o' nights, for in conclusion, and on the word of Mr. Jewell, people have ate, slept, loved - and died - to the combined voices of Mr. Frank S..... and Mr. Bing.....But, obviously I am not one of the "people" for in the immortal words of the late Samuel Goldwyn, you can include me out! Equally, I am certain that few of my readers wish to be included IN on the "combined voices" syndrome.....After all, there is one only....

A thought-provoking letter from Michael Collins, Highgate, N.6.:

A few words on Charles Thompson's biography. First of all let me say I haven't read it in its entirety. I came across it in one of the big London stores (may have been Harrolds) just before Christmas and returned it to the shelves within about two minutes - and so where do we go from here? I couldn't agree more with your reviewer (John Bignell) that the definitive biography has yet to be written. I think you, Mr. Editor, pinpointed the difficulty when, in your postscript to the review, you referred to the fact that even in the days before galloping inflation a presumably adequate study of Al Jolson cost some £15. As you rightly say, publishing houses are not charitable institutions.

One has, therefore, got to be realistic and, consequently, must be discriminating, which is a good thing anyway. The difficulty, as I see it, is in isolating the particular area of research. Bing's multi-faceted talents and interests ranging from singing to shooting, from acting to investment and any other sub-category you are to mention which lies between these extremes, not to mention his king-sized personality of such universal appeal, have unfortunately and no doubt paradoxically, blurred the edges of his real significance in and contribution to the world of entertainment - and even more paradoxically, have done him a disservice in the long run. Like most polymaths he has, perhaps, suffered, through his multi-talents, from having had too many fingers in too many pies.

To be specific and to clarify what I mean, I think that his contribution to television (unlike that of, say, Perry Como) has been more or less negligible. His contribution to radio, on the other hand, has been colossal by any standards. Again, I would venture to say that not even the most avid Crosby fan could claim that he was a GREAT, as distinct from the very competent, actor.....mind you, on second thoughts I may well underestimate what the most avid Crosby fanatics are capable of claiming, but you know what I mean. If I might, for a moment, allude to my own profession - that of a Catholic priest - I must confess I wince every time I see Father O'Malley on the box and would doubt very much if I would have the courage to sit through SAY ONE FOR ME; I expect I would need a heavy dose of sedative after the first reel. I am slightly mystified as to why Bing refers to himself as an actor in his passport. To my mind he is first and foremost a singer (or crooner, if you wish - the word carries no overtones of disparagement to my ears, but then I wasn't about in the 30's when it was, I understand, a frequently-used term of abuse) and it is as a singer alone, I predict, that his reputation will endure. I think he is the greatest popular singer of the Twentieth century and believe time will vindicate this claim when other more inflated reputations will have been diminished by a truer perspective. I do NOT think he is the greatest actor, golfer, parent, comedian, priest impersonator, family man &c. racing pundit, business mogul - you could go on endlessly, to grace the world's

stage and it is extremely foolish to pretend otherwise.

Any prospective biography should, therefore, concentrate on his real strength (I do not necessarily mean confine itself to) and leave the Mary Frances bit to the gossip columns. Who, the crunch question asks, is to write it? Impossible to say, obviously, but (s)he out to be someone with a strong musical background. I have read jazz studies by Barry Ulanov, and have heard of but never come across his study of Bing. I wonder why he hasn't brought his book up-to-date? I'm sure Ken Barnes would be very well equipped to write such a book. Again, since Crosby has his roots in jazz, I would have thought somebody like Benny Green in this country, who claims to be a fan (though sad to relate perhaps more so of F++++ S++++++) might turn in a good professional job. One book I enjoyed was Henry Pleasant's THE GREAT AMERICAN POPULAR SINGERS - I hope I have the title right - where Crosby was analysed purely as a singer and that, refreshingly, from the viewpoint of one who was primarily an opera critic. Anyway, I expect that particular book has been reviewed at some length in your back issues of BING.

Enough of my meanderings; they sound very prescriptive and dogmatic and I do not mean them to be. Its just that I feel very strongly about some of the points I have mentioned and have done for a long time. I feel, in a general way, that Bing has been rather badly served by his PR men over the years. Compare, for instance, the slickness and sophistication of the packaging of Sinatra albums with the hick garishness of those used for Crosby and you will see what I mean. All this is bound to affect image and, as a consequence, sales. Who, after all, is not secretly flattered by the implications in a title like SINATRA FOR SOPHISTICATES (or some such) and unconsciously impelled by what is subtly suggested as being a quality product for a discerning taste? By contrast, those ill-designed albums covers with their blatantly nostalgic overtones - symbolised in that famous joke of shopkeeper to customer requiring a Crosby record: "Certainly madam, but may I see your old age pension book?" - scarcely do credit to a singer who has never happily been relegated to nostalgialand and who, according to himself, has no need to come back since he has never been away.

One point, finally, to round off my sermon. I think such a study should be both scholarly and, in the best sense, critical. The literary critic, C.E.Lewis, said many years ago that it is only when you genuinely like somebody that you are in a position to criticise him; otherwise your strictures are of little value since they are not upheld by a sympathetic understanding of what that artist is on about. Conversely, too much sympathy will blunt the keen edge of critical discernment and ultimately do its subject a disservice. It would be wrong, for instance, to claim that Bing's latest, and to my mind, near disastrous rendition of GEORGIA ON MY MIND from his latest album is on a par with earlier versions of that fine song; it quite simply is not - as the Americans say, period! Again, to take the heat out of the subject, it is irritating to hear DJ's say, against all evidence to the contrary, that Perry Como's voice is as good as it ever was; certainly his technique, like Bing's, is as good as ever but the whole bass register of his voice, in his case never very strong, has now almost disappeared with the result that he sounds almost like an emasculated version of Andy Williams. But then, to the average DJ popularity is everything. Roberta Flack was marvellous in '71 because she sold. I attended an overflow concert of hers in the States at that time and have scarcely heard of her since. Ten years previously, Ray Charles was fantastic - because he sold. Is he still living? Do you remember the dog days of the 60's, incidentally, when Crosby albums had all but disappeared from the shelves? As you say, its nice to shop like you used to shop...

Keep up the good work. No-one else will, I'm afraid, but to return briefly to my point, if I might be so bold as to make one small criticism of the magazine (last issue) in relation to what I have been saying. I think you may be just a little bit touchy editorialwise, e.g. with respect, you did over-react somewhat to Sutcliffe's review of TWLIAA which I haven't heard and therefore am in no position to judge, except for the general observation that coming from a rock-orientated weekly the excerpt you printed seemed generous enough considering, if admittedly, which was perhaps your point, unfair to Pete Moore. Anyway, that is a trifling complaint of what is otherwise an excellent magazine and I am sure you take the general point I am trying to make about the need for real critical standards to be upheld in Crosbyana if it isn't to degenerate to the level of a bland fan club. The man is far too important for that to

to happen.

Another "final" question: could you please let me know - in your own time - whether you have any old copies of BING back-issues and if so are they for sale? By the way, have you ever printed anything on Michael Holliday? I know he was a great fan of the old Master; unfortunately, he died before I ever got a chance to see him on television. I have quite a number of his records but certainly not all as they seem to have been deleted rather quickly. Perhaps its outside the scope of BING but I would certainly be grateful for any information on either records and/or tape transcripts of his shows.

Editor: A tour de force by the Rev. Father - with the historic name, too! Thought provoking as I said at the start - mainly. In parts - goodness me, I nearly said like the curate's egg! But clearly Michael is another of the deep-thinking Crosby admirers - we avoid the use of the word "fan", doesn't befit the dignity of a Crosby follower!

Michael does, of course, betray his "newness" - we have never, NEVER, shrunk from sound criticism. As a matter of fact, the last issue with my own reactions to a SOUTHERN MEMOIR are perhaps a classic in their way! At other times we have indulged in the masochistic pastime of nominating - and discussing - Bing's worst recordings. But complete honesty compels me to add that we always add the proviso that Bing's worst records are infinitely better than the best of others. Which is no doubt a little partisan!

> And I must offer a word to Michael at which he construed as over-reaction to the Sutcliffe "review". The position of reviewers in this world is a very puzzling one: what is their purpose? Allowing that one man's meat is ever another's poison what value can one place on another's view? This issue has, in fact, been argued in the courts some years back when a celebrated critic (if there is such a body!) was banned by a film company from seeing and "reviewing" their films because, if I remember rightly, of the inevitable caustic comments the film produced from the reviewer. They alleged malice towards them - the company - for a reason they couldn't define. They said "We don't want this reviewer to watch our films. Its as simple as that." The reviewer said: "But that takes my livelihood away from me!" I cannot remember the result of this momentous issue....

But there seems to be a place for reviewers: and I think there is provided they stick to facts as far as possible, and that the reader of the review bears in mind it is only one person's view - and it is not inconceivable that the reader may have entirely opposite views to the reviewer on EVERY SUBJECT UNDER THE SUN.

But a review that says, objectively, what is on a record, in a film or play, or in a book, exhibition or what have you for the INFORMATION of the reader; and then offers in all humility his own views of the merits thus presented, is not without use.

Too often, however, I've found reviewers set themselves up as considerably more important than the projects they are "reviewing" & their bon mots, their biting phrases, their caustic wit, is all designed to show how brilliant THEY are...and indeed, quite a few authors began their literary career as reviewers - that nebulous yet potentially so dangerous, "profession".

But, as always, I'm losing my point - and this is that that reviewer referred to the Pete Moore orchestra as "weedy"! Now, if he had said it was heavy, light, out-of-balance, the brass had no "attack", the rhythm was "lumpy" (all good stock phrases of the professional reviewer, bless him!) I wouldn't have turned a hair and said, to myself, "That's what you think, mate!" And left it at that.

But to listen to the album in question (TWLIAA), and to know that the orchestra consisted most times of 44 pieces, defies the adjective "weedy". It is the kind of blatant, witless, observation that can in no sense have any foundation - except to make the reviewer appear ultra-blase. For me such transparently inept assessments completely

destroy the credibility of the reviewer. It is baseless criticism - and causes me to react. Overly? I don't think so. However, to the more concrete thoughts provoked by Michael's well-thought effort. It is certainly evident that the multiplicity of Bing's activities present insoluble problems in presenting the Crosby story in one all-embracing tome.

Consider that the book of his films, THE ROAD TO HOLLYWOOD, numbers around 250 pages, and the ROAD TO BING CROSBY, the discography, nearly 400 there for a start are 650 purely factual pages! Add the LPography, the A to Z to cover the accompanists and fellow-duettists, and it is beginning to get unmanageable. And we haven't even started the true, human, story of Bing Crosby in its biographical form....no, we must face the fact that the complete Crosby Encyclopaedia so many of us dream about will never be a viable project. We must make do with the many parts.....

I must certainly agree with Michael Collins that I think of Bing predominantly, always, as the singer! That's the way it is with me....yet its manifestly absurd when you think of the saga of his films, the fact that for ten consecutive years he was the top box-office "drawer".....radio and records, I suppose, had to go hand in hand. But Bing was the Everest in radio just as he is in the recording field.

Acting? Not the world's best? Of course its easy to agree with Michael here....as Bing has so often reiterated, he played himself. The carefree, warbling troubadour who always got the girl without really trying! And that was, to borrow another American phrase, okay by me....in fact, when THE COUNTRY GIRL and LITTLE BOY LOST came along I was temporarily dismayed to see our light-hearted minstrel playing harrowing roles....I was even more dismayed when the tendency to sing less and less in his films became apparent; culminating, of course, with STAGECOACH when not a note was warbled.

Father O'Malley? A bizarre whimsy - but losing nothing in charm....we are told that a religious adviser was always on hand when these O'Malley films were made though one must confess that this adviser was, at least, extremely tolerant not to mention broadminded and imaginative! And just imagine, if you can, what form that story would take in today's permissiveness - the barely-hinted at love affair between the Father and the nun would not end with that sad little revelation by the Father of the nun's illness....and that's the only reason why he was sending her away....

But, what the heck; it added up to ENTERTAINMENT, didn't it? And that, to again be with it, is what Bing Crosby is all about, surely.

The Thompson book remains somewhat of a mystery. It was barely advertised; it was available for only a short while, and now it seems to have disappeared. I noticed no real effort to promote it. It certainly hasn't met with much acclaim and seems, so soon, to have faded into oblivion.....unmourned.

Member ROY BOOTH, 11 Rose Gardens, Little Neston, Wirral drew an interesting letter from the author, Chas. Thompson, however. Roy wrote to him on some points though it was such a long time before he had a reply - and hadn't kept a copy of his letter - that he wasn't too clear on what he had asked Mr. Thompson! But he received the following letter which does seem self-explanatory as to what Roy had written:

> Dear Roy Booth,
>
> Thank you for your letter of the 3.10.75. I'm sorry for the delay in replying but I have been out of the country working on an Edith Piaf radio series.
>
> I don't know who heard the Open House broadcast with Pete, but they certainly didn't listen all that carefully. I wasn't at all uncomplimentary about Bing; far from it. I merely told the truth in answer to Pete's questions. Bing did have problems with his first family and openly talks about them; he felt there were lessons to

(Cont...

be learned from his experiences. I hope that you have had a chance to read the book by now and will see what I mean. When you do a biography on someone as important as Bing there is a great responsibility to be truthful and accurate. I hope I have been both. Also, Bing read the manuscript and authorised it. If there had been anything he wasn't happy with then it would have come out.

With regard to your point about members of Bing's family not speaking to him, I can only assume it was a point I made during the interview about Bing being very much his own man and being anxious that his brother Bob was, too. I did say that they hadn't had much contact for the last four years, but went on to say that both brothers understood the reasons for this - if a call to the family flag came, they would be as close as anyone right away.

I do hope that the International Crosby Circle aren't hurt by my book, I think that the complete truth about Bing makes him more of a warm and genuine human being and not just a far-off idol.

It did occur to me that maybe the Circle would like me to address one of the meetings I understand you hold from time-to-time and to answer any of the questions your members might have. If you're interested, drop me a line - my number in Holland Park Avenue is 94.

Thanks again for writing and all the best.

CHAS. THOMPSON.

Well, there is a lengthy and honest attempt to clear up some points; it will be up to our "guest-planners" for the next Leeds meeting to consider whether to accept Mr. Thompson's generous offer to address the members of the Circle. Anyway, well done Roy Booth.

Now what else has Michael Collins prompted us to talk about? Oh yes, Barry Ulanov; this book is highly readable and much more, I think to the liking of the Crosby addict though it was written a long time ago and, as Michael suggests, needs bringing up to date. As we have mentioned before, however, the book on Bing by Dr. Mize remains the most complete analysis of the Crosby singing style though it didn't attempt biographical outlines. And its not much use our mentioning it really for the book has long been unobtainable.

Have the Crosby album sleeves been unimaginative? It hadn't occurred to me, though some bizarre caricatures have been used in a few cases. On the other hand there have been some splendid pictures....but I take Michael's point. I don't necessarily subscribe to the view that a sleeve "sells" an album. But, I'm one of the beyond-recalls... I would buy Crosby albums if they were wrapped up in old newspapers! It MAY be a factor in promoting albums; but I wonder what kind of record buyer, or music-lover it is who is impelled to buy by the sleeve? I know of singers (who shall be nameless) whose records could be clothed in silver lame or mink - and I still wouldn't touch 'em with a barge-pole, leave alone buy them! Still, perhaps Michael's observations on sleeves will prompt some diligent reader to do an analysis of Bing's sleeves....we should not forget though whilst talking of album sleeves that, in the case of the 15 albums comprising BING'S HOLLYWOOD, Bing was afforded yet another unique honour: 15 portraits of him (in film roles/costumes) were specially commissioned to grace the albums. SINATRA FOR SOPHISTICATES deserves some mention, if only for its superb kidology.

Perry Como? He still sounds extremely pleasant to me; more importantly, he does get hold of good material, doesn't he.

Michael Holliday? Oh yes, we always had plenty to say about Mike the shock of whose

death remains very vivid to a lot of our members, one of whom was with Mike only a week or so before his demise; and when, apparently, he was in the best of spirits with no hint of what was to come. Truly a very great tragedy. Mike Holliday was far and away the best of the Crosby "impersonators" and even the most faithful Bing admirer could be fooled on times by Mike. Often it was only the accompaniment that enabled identification. I say "impersonator" because I have it on the most authentic terms that Michael Holliday's natural voice was NOT like Bing's and that he had to assume it. That he could do so so magnificently is a tribute to his artistry, perhaps. Certainly, it was his monumental devotion to Bing and the Crosby voice that prompted him to sing the way he did and not only the prospects of commercial success.

Mike's TV shows in the 50's were very popular indeed and a delight to see. What was even more astonishing, however - and I have this from the same authentic source, poor Mike was definitely NOT the relaxed, easy-going personality he projected on TV and records. His albums do seem to have dropped from the scene; but it was only about 18 months ago (I think) that EMI issued a comprehensive album of his biggest hits in their ONE-UP series. I don't know of any recordings available of those TV shows but I'm certain readers can help Michael Collins with Holliday albums. There are, incidentally, pictures of Mike with Bing (in America) in Frank Murphy's "gallery". The all-star memorial album issued in connection with Mike Holliday, and containing a spoken message from Bing, is still wanted by member of our members. This album is TRIBUTE TO MICHAEL HOLLIDAY Columbia E 33SX1635, 1964.

> Michael Collins's reasoned letter has been dealt with at some length on its merits, but also because it afforded an excellent opportunity to re-air so many interesting Crosby aspects. I feel certain many members will be moved to offer further comment on some of the points raised. And we'll be delighted to use them in the next issue of BING.

To return to the question of who could, or should, write the full story of the fabulous Crosby career, I would rule out Benny Green. I always feel there is an undertone of satirical patronage when he talks about the old days - as he does, quite a lot. But never, to me, convincingly. And while Ken Barnes has undoubtedly struck up quite a rare rapport with Bing in the past couple of years, one of my "must" requirements for a biographer would be that he was a Thirties man by which I mean a man who clearly recalls the atmosphere of the very first impact of Bing. And that I fancy requires someone a bit older than the man to whom we, nevertheless, will always be grateful!

Regarding the book GREAT AMERICAN POPULAR SINGERS, by HENRY PLEASANTS, we have mentioned this excellent book though not at great length, and coincidentally, JOHN BIGNELL sends us an appropriate note about it:

> Bing rates very, very highly indeed in this book and members would be advised to get hold of a copy, even if it means resort to the local library which will almost certainly carry a copy. Of the excellent references to Bing I particularly liked the following; it came from the Glossary of Terms used in the book:
>
> "MORDENT - from mordere, 'to bite', a fast, light, shaking involving either an upper or a lower additional note, widely used by popular singers either ornamentally or to produce the effect of a catch in the throat. Almost any record track by BING CROSBY will yield an example."

It is interesting that Mr. Pleasants does not bother to search among the other singers and their records to find one or two examples - just take ANY of Bing's records...

YET ANOTHER BOOK ON POPULAR PERFORMERS HAS MADE ITS BOW - LESLIE GAYLOR WAS INVITED TO THE SOCIAL LAUNCHING OF THE BOOK - AND IT IS CERTAINLY WORTH A REVIEW IN OUR PAGES.

IT APPEARS ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE....

"CALL THEM IRREPLACEABLE" by John Fisher.
Published by Hamish Hamilton at £6.95p.

REVIEWED BY
JOHN BIGNELL

Mr. Fisher has come up with a splendid effort. He had the idea of chosing twelve artistes who, in his opinion, possess that almost indefinable magic of true "star quality" and has proceeded to explain in admirable and concise detail how and why they possess it.

As far as the twelve-and-a-half large pages devoted to our man Crosby are concerned (plus two pages of photographs depicting various stages of the illustrious fifty-year career) Mr. Fisher reveals more 'in depth' understanding of the phenomenal Bing than, it may be claimed, Charles Thompson managed in a complete book not long ago. His literary style is polished and sophisticated; this is not a book to be picked up and lightly read. But for my money this is as it should be and I am delighted that at last someone has decided to treat the subject of "popular" performers in an adult and intelligent manner.

The "Bing" section gets off to a good start on the very first page - page 119 - when the author gets to the very heart of the subject when he observes that for all Bing's famed nonchalance, and his relaxed style - I quote - "it is inconceivable that a success as phenomenal as Crosby's should not have been built upon a sometime foundation of practice, sweat, tears". Then later: "...he would not, and never will, give away the exact extent of the practice required to make each number succumb to his ideal of relaxed perfection. He had shrewdly made sure that security on his own bathroom was the tightest anywhere in the world".

> Then again, consider this...."He also possessed a sense of humour, a quality unusual for a popular singer if only because of the limitations placed on displaying it" - and - "His supremacy as simply a singer of songs is and doubtless will remain irrevocable." Mr. Fisher's tributes to Bing come fast and furious; yet never does he overstate his case and one has the overall impression that his subject has been thoroughly researched in the case of all twelve artists featured in the book.

There is much statistical detail which will be familiar to all serious students of Crosbyana but, unusually for such efforts and a distinctly refreshing change, I at least was unable to discover any serious flaws in the figures quoted....this author even gets Bing's date of birth correct!

I will not spoil the enjoyment in store for those of you who will be obtaining this excellent - and large book - by revealing more except to quote just one more line from the last page of the Crosby section: "But however many levels there may be to his appeal, they are all overshadowed, however much he might protest to the contrary, by arguably the most prodigious talent the world has ever known for making hard work look easy".

With regard to the rest of the book, one cannot seriously quarrel with Mr. Fisher's choice of eleven companions with Bing on the highest pedestal of the show business ladder. One regrets the omission of one's own personal favourites (in my case W.C. Bill Fields and Laurel & Hardy) which has been explained anyway as they were 'film' men rather than from the vaudeville background and their stories have already been told elsewhere. Of the eleven chosen one has one's prejudices, too, and in my own case I am still less than ecstatic over Dietrich, Kaye, Chevalier and Astaire. Again, Jolson and Coward have never been particular favourites of mine, but Benny, Hope and Durante certainly are.

Mr. Fisher parades his "team" in no discernible order or pattern and is careful not to draw close comparisons between them. Even so, I have a hunch - and its no more than that - that his own particular favourites are Judy Garland and Frank Sinatra. Read the book yourselves and see if you agree.

Finally, I must say that, having met the author, it is most encouraging to find a "post-war" individual (John Fisher was born as the 1939/45 War ended) perceptive enough to be able to discern a "star quality" in so many performers who made their names before he was born. In conclusion, I am convinced that here we have a man who really could, when the time eventually comes, write THE definitive biography of the incomparable Bing Crosby. If he ever decides to do so he can count on the wholehearted assistance, I am sure, of the officials of the ICC who have such a wealth of information at their disposal.

Editor: I have yet to read this book so it ill-behoves me to "criticise" it; it sounds interesting and was a novel way of presenting a book. But reading a book with which one disagrees, violently or non-violently, isn't an undiluted pleasure. Indeed, it can become a chore. And John has me puzzled, or rather Mr. Fisher has, according to John. If Fields and Laurel & Hardy were excluded because they were "film" one might ask why Dietrich is included? Her career has certainly been dealt with elsewhere at great length and I cannot bring myself to believe she was included for her vocal ability which, to be kind, is invariably embarrassing. Then again, toleration and respect for the one man's meat &c. adage must be considered.

And John (Bignell) returns us to the Crosby-biographer "author" theme! And a Post-War candidate is, in my view, at a grave disadvantage...the story of an earthquake from a survivor is more graphic, more authentic, than a report from a belated arrival.....

Still, it does seem that selecting a dozen "irreplaceables" is quite a diverting - and no mean - task. Bing must be an automatic choice in ANY list....but the others? Still bearing in mind the one man's meat "thing", for me Astaire is quite irreplaceable; not for the appeal of his quaint singing but for his out-of-this-world dancing. The comedian for me is that great "philosopher" - the immortal Schnozzle! I might include Al Jolson, too...but then I must have more time to think of others that cannot be replaced. There aren't so many of them, really. However, members will almost certainly react and if we get a selection of their "twelves" it may make an interesting feature for the next issue. So, let us have your 12 popular entertainers - of all or any time - and we'll see who emerges as the popular irreplaceables.

WHEN COMMENTING ON THE DEREK JEWELL STORY ON BING IN "THE SUNDAY TIMES" IT WAS SAID IT WAS THE FIRST OF TWO ARTICLES.....the second, NOT by Mr. Jewell was about.....wait for it....MICK JAGGER!

Article No. 1 Bing Crosby.....Article No. 2. Mick Jagger. Surely, in its a way, a classic on the "sublime to the bizarre" theme?

ICC TIES

- worn around the neck, that is! The current tie has been in existence for many years now and our suppliers tell me that stocks are low. It seems, therefore, an appropriate moment to accede to many suggestions that the design be changed. The present tie is dark blue - virtually Navy - with a small (one critic called it "microscopic" and insisted one needed to carry a magnifying glass around to identify it!).motif indicating International Crosby Circle.

It is felt the colour should remain dark blue to maintain the "blue of the night, gold of the day" colour scheme. Perhaps the motif should be a plain but effective ICC, or even BING - in gold, of course. In say $\frac{3}{8}$" letters. I will not place any new orders on these lines until a fair period for comment from members has passed - say 3 weeks. Dark blue, of course, can be worn with most types and colours of lounge suits - but if you feel differently - let the Editor know in the stipulated time. Despite the colossal effects of inflation, the suppliers tell me the new price will be £1.45p + 10p P & P. The few old ones - still a very nice tie - is £1.25 + 10p. FROM BAXTERS, THE BADGE CENTRE, ROPERGATE, PONTEFRACT, YORKS.

CC PEOPLE - - - - - - - - -

by THE EDITOR
REG BRISTO.

are pretty nice people. I should know; I get the mail - I get letters to print, confidential letters NOT to print. I hear of deaths, sad losses. I hear of great delight, happiness...I get offers of HELP by the dozen. I get kind thoughts about the work that goes into the mag..and the Mini-Discog., and the LPography - all kinds of things. I heard in a lovely letter of the lady in the south of England who suffers from a kidney disease, has arthritis,but was praying for tickets for the Palladium for she was determined to get there, nearly 200 miles each way....she is - 69! I know of another lady who spent years in a wheel-chair, also with arthritis; she had forgotten what it was like to go - shopping....when suddenly, with an idea planted in her mind and incredible will-power and over a period of time, she conquered that dreadfully painful disease. The wheel-chair is a thing of the past. I'll say it is - she spends most of her evenings now dancing - old-tyme and modern!

I hear of younger people about to leave school, or going to university, and what their hopes are....I hear about football teams that members work with and for....all kinds of activities...I hear of lovely grandchildren, too...and this, all that I come to know, or that I read comes about because of the one common bond: CROSBYANA. A tremendous bond it is too....I hear, as I say, of youngsters leaving school - I hear from members about to RETIRE, and of how looking forward to it they are....that they can do all the listing, cataloguing, record-playing, taping, that they have never really found the time for.....the treasured 78s that will NEVER be discarded, even tho' they're virtually unplayable now...but they have seen their possessors thro' 30 or 40 years of trials and tribulations - and happiness, and delights. And I delight that this is so....it is a very rewarding job I have and the hard-work is easily, easily, repaid.... but there are other activities and perhaps I can tell you of some of them.

There's GEORGE AYLMER of Bury St. Edmunds, who after years of travelling in "food" suddenly wondered why he should travel and NOT open his OWN shop....this he did; then another. And he's doing very nicely, thank you. And it couldn't have happened to a nicer chap - or his very friendly wife. George is the member who plays music in his shops - which is a common sales policy these days. The difference in George's shops is - he plays Bing tapes all day! And the customers - and staff - love it! As well they might.

> And now George has really pulled something off: Quoting from the BURY FREE PRESS: "The friendliness of a corner shop and the low prices of a super-market are a prize-winning combination for Woolpit grocers, H. C. Addison & Sons (George's hops are known by this name)....for proprietor GEORGE AYLMER who runs the family business has WON A TRIP TO THE MONTREAL OLYMPICS IN A 'BEST SHOP' COMPETITION.....
>
> 'We sell anything from baked beans to caviar and what we haven't got we gladly order,' says Mr. Aylmer....the shop has been known as 'the Fortnum and Mason's of Suffolk!"

And mostly to the sound of - Bing Crosby! So, George's trip, worth well over £1,000, was indeed a prize worth winning. And if it can possibly be arranged, George wants to meet some of our Canadian members whilst there... the newspaper carried some excellent pictures of George and his wife Betty, together with members of their shop staff. Congratulations George and Betty.... we'll try and reproduce one of 'em....

Then there's out SINGING members; we're all well aware of ROY CHAPPELL, who keeps very busy as a full professional artist with a "Touch of the Bing's" - endlessly bringing Bing into his act; DICK LILLICO in Newcastle, singing over the local radio in Bing-style and waiting for a TV chance; FRANK WILGAUS of Cleethorpes is another

I've heard put over a song in fine style, to his own guitar accompaniment; Edward Hale, our indefatigable publicist sings along with Bing, no less, on records in quite creditable style. These we knew about, but two bit surprises have turned up lately.

The first was a tape I received from my good friends, Roy and Adrienne DODDS of Chesterfield. I believe Roy used to sing himself but this tape was no Bing effort. Nor did it sound like an enthusiastic amateur "having a go"...it couldn't be Bing-orientated for it was ADRIENNE giving out in great style, lovely intonation, clear diction and excellent timing! Mind, when I read the accompanying letter it was a little easier to understand for Adrienne told me that before settling down as a mother she had sung quite extensively - and had indeed, sung with Reginald Dixon and Alyn Ainsworth! forsooth!

Then I had the opportunity of hearing a really Bing-influenced voice: and what a surprise that was! It belonged to FRANK JOYCE, known to me, with his brother John, as a member for years and years...and I didn't know what a splendid voice Frank possessed! Just about as near as anyone can get to the true Crosby-tones....

And the song he was singing! Ah, now what do I tell you about that, I wonder? Do I tell you NOW, or wait to see if the impossible dream becomes a reality? The song was called SING ME A MEMORY; a song written by a couple of people in Birmingham who felt, when they had finished it, that the song was perfect for...BING CROSBY! What is more, everyone who has heard it so far, including your Editor, feels the same way. Full of rich, descending, phrases with an above-average lyric....as I write the song has been "demonstrated" to Ken Barnes and Pete Moore who have, both, expressed interest.....I keenly await developments, with absolutely no axe to grind except to hear Bing sing this lovely song full of a 30's style yet curiously modern. What is more important, it offers a wonderful theme of the kind Ken Barnes has been looking for. However, as I've indicated, my problem as I write is how far to go with this.....at its wonderful best it could turn out to be one of the loveliest songs Bing has sung; on the other hand, such are the vagaries of the song-publishing business it might never be heard of again. To my mind, this would be a tragedy, but we must wait and see.

The song was written by PETER DUFFY (lyrics) with a melody-collaborator named BARBARA BLUME; getting the Bing idea they enquired of a Birmingham paper for a Crosby enthusiast, who turned out to be our good friend FRANK HATFIELD....who got in touch with Ken, Pete, Leslie Gaylor -- and me.... and that's where I leave it all for now UNLESS, as I say, the impossible happens! The impossible being, of course, Bing having a new, tremendous hit record - by a couple of British "amateurs". A wondrous thought.....

> Then we come to JOHN MILLS (Cardiff) who, so far as I know, does NOT sing. But he is incredibly zealous in thinking up record projects for Bing - ever since Ken Barnes, at Leeds last September, told us he would welcome a good theme on which an album could be based. John went a bit further: he produced 50 songs, one for each of Bing's career years! Some were songs Bing has sung, and some he has NEVER sung. Not only that, when I opened John's parcel I had a shock: Was this possibly an album I had MISSED? John had actually designed, and made, a full-size sleeve in colour! A tremendous and diligent effort that has been passed on to Ken Barnes - though I had to confess to John that there appeared to be at least two years' arranging work involved if ever the set was to see the light of day! Which would make the 50 years slightly out of date. Nevertheless, it was application of a high order by John Mills.

We have already mentioned somewhere that another of our young members, KEN CROSSLAND, has entered the realms of matrimony - dark horse Ken. He was with us at Leeds last Autumn - as he always is - but never a word about the forthcoming nuptials! We don't know ANYTHING about the bride - except that she is, clearly, Mrs. Ken Crossland - clever stuff this - but we can at least wish them every happiness - coupled with the hope that the new Mrs. Ken likes Bing Crosby....otherwise, she may face more than the usual trials of the wedded state. If that sounds cynical, ignore it - I'm not that way usually....

Little ALICIA CARTER, whom you will recall being actually kissed by Bing on the

occasion of her winning a competition on her horse, Mr. Perks. Bing was there to present the rosettes and prizes....when we printed this delightful story (which never made the papers, by the way except probably the "local") we rather thought we would get other ladies, young or old, who had shared the distinction, of being kissed by Bing, with Dorothy Lamour, Joan Bennett, Princess Grace ...but no, no-one came forward so it seems Alicia is our only member to enjoy that experience - though the sour-faced men might say "endured the experience".....Alicia was no flash-in-the-pan. She remains a dedicated Bing fan, and her dad tells me her bedroom walls are covered with his photographs.... and she is still riding Mr. Perks.

Margaret McCUNE lives in Glasgow and has sent me a lovely little picture of her son, Gary, with Bing. Mr. C. is signing his autograph for Gary and obviously giving him the attention he reserves for everyone, especially children. Margaret, alas, "nearly died when I saw my letter in a previous issue"...what a shame she has asked me NOT to publish her letter. Well, I respect that but I'm sure you will spot some sort of link in the name of her son. Yes, Margaret feels she had something in common with Bing's first son and I'm not saying what it is - except that she resolved that if ever she had a son he would be called Gary. And now Gary McCune has met Bing... and his mother has an enlargement of the picture framed and adorning the walls.....

There is part of Margaret's letter I feel safe in using, though it should more properly be in TRADING POST:

"Is there a record I could get with THE BELLS OF ST. MARY'S on it, also TUMBLING TUMBLEWEEDS. This latter is a great favourite of my husband's; he used to sing it all the time. We had these, of course, on 78s but what with moving and the passage of time they get broken.....Of all the records I have of Bing, and it is a great number now, I haven't got one where Bing really 'croons' as they say, Boo-Boo-Booo....I wonder if you could help me there, too? My children bought me the WORLD RECORDS set THE VERY BEST OF BING CROSBY. It is great - but I love Bing singing the up-to-date songs too."

TUMBLING TUMBLEWEEDS appeared on the Brunswick LP TWILIGHT ON THE TRAIL, which is now almost unobtainable; it also appeared on the fairly recent Coral RHYTHM ON THE RANGE and should still be order-able if not indeed still in the shops. BELLS OF ST. MARY'S is on BING'S HOLLYWOOD 2....but no where else obtainable now.

I think it has been established that Bing never did actually sing "boo-boo-boo", on record or anywhere else! His imitators - comedian variety, did....he did plenty of ad libbing, plenty of note-bending, plenty of melody-embroidery but I can think of no record where he actually did the boo-boo thing.

I do hope Margaret doesn't feel too badly about seeing this part of her letter in print! I loved it. And I'm bound to say, Gary looks a charming little lad!

Still with the ladies, JOAN DUNNINGTON, Alford, Lincs. was surprised to see in her local newspaper a photograph of a woman "arranging Bing Crosby tulips!" Joan wrote to the firm mentioned, MATTH. VERDEGAAL LTD., Allens Farm, Hofleet Stow, Bicker, Nr. Boston, Lincs - a Dutch firm obviously and in return Joan got a picture of the Bing Crosby tulip: "which is glowing scarlet in colour"! They, the firm, did not enlarge on how the tulip got its name, which was a pity. I believe we've heard of Bing Crosby roses, or some other plants, have we not?

Well, there they are - a few random notes on what some of our readers get up to. Seems to me this could easily become a regular feature: if however, you do NOT want anything you write used in these pages, PLEASE SAY SO! Discretion, naturally, is used in what is suitable and what is not and in those circumstances, we don't <u>really</u> expect anyone to object.

BY THE WAY, DON'T FORGET TO MARK ITEMS FOR "TRADING POST" CLEARLY ON A SEPARATE SHEET OF PAPER: BEING ABLE TO EASILY SEGREGATE SUCH ITEMS IS A BIG HELP.

AS FORECAST, WE'RE BACK TO "KEEPING TRACK" - with the Editor deputising for BERT BISHOP IN THIS CASE:

THE SECOND LONDON ALBUM

BING CROSBY: "AT MY TIME OF LIFE". "BING'S ANNIVERSARY SALUTE TO 50 YEARS OF SHOW HITS"

United Artists: UAS 29956. with THE PETE MOORE ORCHESTRA.

Album produced by Ken Barnes. Price: £2.99p

All Bing's albums are eagerly awaited but it is likely that no other has been awaited in quite the way this one has. It was recorded at Chappells Studios, Bond Street, London during the period when the first London-recorded album THAT'S WHAT LIFE IS ALL ABOUT was recorded under the aegis of Ken Barnes who initiated this completely new saga of Bing's illustrious recording career. This recording session, it will be remembered, was the occasion when a dozen or so members of the ICC were permitted in the studio to see, hear, and meet the maestro at work.

> Some have railed at the long delay in releasing this second album; but it should be remembered that while WE would have bought both albums together, it was a more sensible commercial policy regarding the overall sales of the albums to space them.

But, its here now - it was in the shops around June 5. At least, that was the day I obtained my copy and I had been watching the shops daily!

The sleeve notes - not credited - deal with all the songs featured - oh, Ken Barnes and Alan Warner trace the histories of the songs featured so its not anonymous! The titles, seen before of course in BING, are:

Side 1:

1. At My Time of Life (from GREAT EXPECTATIONS).
2. Cabaret. (from the show of that name).
3. Something to Remember You By (from THREE'S A CROWD).
4. Heatwave (from AS THOUSANDS CHEER).
5. My Heart Stood Still (from A CONNECTICUT YANKEE 1927)
6. Razzle Dazzle (from CHICAGO).
7. Hello Dolly (from show of that name).

Side 2:

1. How Are things in Glocca Morra? (from FINIAN'S RAINBOW).
2. I Got Rhythm. (from GIRL CRAZY).
3. Looking at You. (from WAKE UP AND DREAM).
4. I' Never Fall In Love Again. (from PROMISES, PROMISES).
5. Thou Swell (from A CONNECTICUT YANKEE 1927).
6. With a Song in My Heart. (from SPRING IS HERE).
7. Great Day (from show of that name).

The first thing you will notice, in these days when American albums seem firmly set on ten titles only, this one contains fourteen. Indeed, the playing time of the album is quite extensive - but by an ironic stroke of fate the title Bing was working on when we were present has been excluded! This was a song called YOURS SINCERELY!

And secondly, let's put the record (?) quite straight about the "London recording" by reiterating what we already know: that the first, and title, song was actually recorded in Los Angeles earlier this year, and was slotted in with the other 13 London re-

recorded tracks. The actual playing time of this album is around 45 minutes, which is excellent value.

> And what can, and must, be said at the start, quite unequivocally, is that Bing sounds tremendous. Strong, indeed powerful, the eternal clarity of diction, the phrasing as immaculate as ever, the occasional "ad-lib". And above all, the unique timbre remains.... THAT'S WHAT LIFE IS ALL ABOUT set the pace, this newer album confirms that it wasn't just new-found enthusiasm based on the novelty of Bing recording here in England, with a new set-up of producer, musical director, studios, environment et al. Bing sounds really grand. Whatever else may be said, or written, that is a fact. As you can now readily hear.

This does not mean that Bing sings the way, for instance, he sang PLEASE, or LOVE IN BLOOM, or TEMPTATION! And just who would be expecting that? But the above remains true. It is still the incomparable, powerful, enduring, endearing voice of Bing Crosby now, as always, instantly recognisable, and universally loved and appreciated.

Listening to these album - as I've done constantly and conscientiously because I want to give an objective assessment and not just a paean of praise, something struck me quite forcibly. The knowing ones will say "About time you woke up to the facts of modern recording..." It is this:

> It belatedly dawned on me that whereas Bing used to sing with, or was accompanied by, dance bands, or jazz bands, rhythmic outfits, call them what you will, nowadays in the recording field, a vocal record is also an orchestral exercise. Paul Whiteman, Gus Arnheim, the Dorseys, Bob Scobey, Vic Schoen and others are irrevocably associated with Crosby recordings. And rightly so. Ah, you will say - but he made the bulk of his records with John Scott Trotter and Victor Young, and they were not dance-bands or jazz bands!
>
> True, they did not come strictly into that category - but surely, they were dance-band orientated? And they invariably accompanied Bing in discernible tempos and with what some came to say were "predictable arrangements". Well, when you want to hear Bing singing, easily and effortlessly, the band had only to be incidental. More felt than heard, one might even say, going to extremes! True, a lovely string passage, or a smooth trombone eight bars would often catch the ear, or say Red Nichols would crop up on trumpet - not to mention Jack Teagarden on trombone....or Camarata on piano...one can muse endlessly.

But, I repeat, though there have been other instances, this album more than any other, brought home to me the way in which vocal-accompaniment is approached these days. There is not the four-brass, four reeds, four rhythm classic band line-up any more. Now, flutes and their embroidering obligatos, French horns, harps, all form part of the background - and some will rush in to say "...and not so much the BACKGROUND!"

Thus, I got quite a few surprises on listening to this latest album. I was anticipating, for instance, a swingy fairly up-tempo effort for MY HEART STOOD STILL; ditto for I GOT RHYTHM and was startled to hear the very individual treatment they had received from Pete Moore. Pete, amongst all his obvious talents, is clearly very percussion-prejudiced - to the extent, I fear, that a lot of the drumming is not easy on the ear. In fact, I found that I had to turn the bass control right off, and the treble to maximum, to obtain a sound that wasn't overbearing.

In I GOT RHYTHM, Bing carries the melody-line - except for a very brief passage - entirely and completely. The accompaniment, while intriguing, is undeniably "gimmicky" and as far as I'm concerned, nowhere near the best arrangement of this song I've ever heard. GREAT DAY too, I must regretfully record, pleases me not at all by virtue of its brash and noisy treatment. But to the assets, considerable as

they are. The title song has already been dealt with by Bert Bishop by virtue of its issue as a single. We must agree with Bert: an entirely pedestrian, unremarkable song whose only claim to distinction must be that Bing sang it. A lyric that virtually says nothing and one can only ponder on the reasons for its selection as the "A" of a single - perhaps because it is apposite to Bing's current thinking and age. Nevertheless, it moves along nicely with a suitable accompaniment. Won't grab anybody by the throat.

CABARET can be coupled with RAZZLE DAZZLE and here I can reemphasise the point about modern accompaniments being an orchestral exercise for here, in marked contrast to some of the numbers yet to be heard, is a demonstration of the sheer versatility of the orchestra Pete assembled. For this is a slip-back to the 20's - even to the inclusion of a banjo and the drummer conjuring up a vision of temple-blocks and the other less sophisticated equipment they knocked around in those days. And unless my pleasure with CABARET marks me off irrevocably let me add I can only just remember certain incidents from about 1928 on - and little or nothing of the music scene! This is a good, rhythmic, interpretation/and, importantly, Bing obviously happy with this sound behind him. The ragtime Bing forsooth. This is a song that has already had good mileage from other singers since its introduction in 1966 - a still modern number.

SOMETHING TO REMEMBER YOU BY: a well-arranged ballad, eminently suitable and an adornment to the album. Plaintively treated by Bing.

HEAT WAVE - the Berlin song which contrary to most people contemporary with its origin has survived and containing the first of some very bizarre lyric rhymes, e.g. Heatwave by making her seatwave. Others later on on "girder" with "murder", and the essence of quintessence....ah well, can't all be Cole Porter's, can they! This song has what I describe as a "psychedelic" arrangement to which the solo singer must make extraordinary concessions - and certainly carry the melody. Perhaps a straightforward, unadorned, rumba-rhythm is more appropriate.

MY HEART STOOD STILL; well-remembered from Jessie Matthews's version and treated by Pete Moore and Bing as a slow-moving ballad; we can bracket, as in the case of CABARET and RAZZLE DAZZLE, HEART STOOD STILL with WITH A SONG IN MY HEART for both receive the same treatment tempo-less ballad treatment. We haven't so far mentioned a very interesting and pertinent point - and that is we are treated very generously to the verses of the song in many of the numbers. WITH A SONG IN MY HEART is one so treated. This is the signature tune of one of the BBC's long-running record request programmes; how nice if they got up-dated and switched to this attractive Bing version?

HELLO DOLLY, another number recent enough to be familiar and sung in great style by Bing though the orchestra unmistakeably throws down a challenge.

So we come to what is for me the top number of the album - and here I'm happy to say that Pete Moore excelled himself. The arrangement is excellent and Bing's affinity not only with a ballad but with and Irish ballad, is very, very, apparent. If someone tells me Glocca Morra is in Scotland I shall die of shame.....I've got Tobermory Bay in mind which was a Scottish insertion in an Irish album! Gracie Fields always sang this nostalgic song from FINIAN'S RAINBOW beautifully and Bing emulates the Lassie from Rochdale. It has an appropriately lyric opening and then Bing sets off into the verse practically unaccompanied; he proceeds into the chorus in that lovely "conversational" ballad-style Bing sometimes uses virtually untroubled by the accompaniment. Which is a good mark, a very good mark. The first chorus is followed by a smooth trombone passage, giving way to a string-passage worthy of Mantovani and Bing comes back to round off a brilliant performance all round. Its as well to mention that whether or not one likes a song even before it is performed can be very pertinent. If one has a natural antipathy to a song, its difficult to enthuse about it no matter how well its sung! A reviewer, naturally, tries to bear this in mind....,so I was rather disconsolate when a member spoke to me by telephone and to my utter astonishment told me he thought GLOCCA MORRA was excellent sung, beautifully arranged - BUT HE HATED THE SONG! Who'd be a performer or producer? But he didn't change me. This is a beautiful track.

I GOT RHYTHM has been dealt with; of great interest to students of musicianly technique

and the arranger's avant-garde explorations but completely diverting from the vocalist even tho' he carries the entire burden of the melody. This could have benefitted from the CABARET-accompanying outfit - which in truth, is what the song was written for. To me, alas, this version belies the title.

LOOKING AT YOU would you believe, has a lovely swinging arrangement and rivals for the No. 1 "hit" of the album. I don't know whether this will please or offend Ken and Pete but it could have been a John Scott Trotter effort! Perhaps a shade more "beaty" (and of course, with the benefit of ultra-modern recording techniques), but reminiscent of an older-time Crosby record. I love it. It has the tenor sax riding along easily over muted brass during Bing's break in well-remembered fashion. It also has a beautiful tempo. Yes indeed, among the contenders.

I'LL NEVER FALL IN LOVE AGAIN: "They don't write songs like that any more..." has, like most truisms, now become one of the favourite lines of hard-up comedians and witless dee-jays. This is a modern song from Burt Bacharach and it is a pungent commentary on today's songwriting scene that this gentleman is one of its leading lights. For sheer disinterest and inanity his compositions want some whacking - RAINDROPS KEEP FALLING ON MY HEAD, for instance, must be a masterpiece of triviality. The song in question, I'LL NEVER FALL IN LOVE AGAIN enjoyed success with a female singer and is the type of song that people sway mindlessly to in a modern disco..... when it comes to "smooching time", so I'm told! Not a lot of melody and a lyric that contains "pneumonia" and "phone-yer"....but I feel Bing sings it to its best advantage, perhaps a little tongue-in-cheek so that it turns out not an unpleasant number.

THOU SWELL must win some sort of prize as the oddest song title ever; I didn't know what the sleeve-notes tell us, e.g. that the first A CONNECTICUT YANKEE was a 1927 show, with music by Rodgers & Hart (then with their best years to come, of course). When the film was made with Bing, Sir Cedric Hardwicke, and William Bendix, in 1947/48 for Paramount, the R & H score wasn't available owing to legal problems so Johnny Burke and Jimmy Van Heusen wrote a new one - which also proved very popular. The involved plot of this film flashes back to the year 528AD - and Pete Moore dreamed up a very medieval opening, complete with spinnette, for this number THOU SWELL - the period of course, accounting for the "olde" title. Many listenings still hasn't explained the title to me. No matter; Bing had this special reason for singing this song - its non-availability for his film.

WITH A SONG IN MY HEART starts off with the guitarist only - perhaps at Bing's elbow as in days of yore? - and we get a very studied, melodious verse-chorus rendering.

To the crashing finale - GREAT DAY. The orchestra, whilst raring to go, answers to the reins reasonably well while Bing is singing; afterwards, it runs amok.....with ear-battering effect, making one leap for the volume control - a procedure one would rather leave to the director/producer, perhaps.

It will be appreciated one would only write of a new album in these pages where, contrary to the Rev. Mike Collins's first impressions, we are wont tobe quite analytical in our reviews. Apart from some of the possibly unkinder observations, this is a fine album; full of artistry from all concerned and a tremendous addition to the Crosby repertoire of albums. True, we have to face up to the "modern" concept of an orchestra that strives for as much attention as the solo vocalist. If we can do this, all well and good.

I have a letter from a long-time member which says he has played the album three times, with growing irritation each time, and he doubts he will ever play it again. He took five pages or so to say why; but I'm not quoting him to that extent for I feel certain he is likely to have "second thoughts" - in the same way that, to a small extent, I felt perhaps I had been unduly hard on A SOUTHERN MEMOIR; mind, my main burden of light and shade, forte and pianissimo, attention to what a lyric says, still goes - but I was getting over 'flu when I wrote that piece! I expected to be assailed for my views on that album, but by a startlingly small number of members. And equal, if not more, number of members actually agreed with me.

The sleeve is tasteful, subdued even; one gets the impression that Bing, if not in the doghouse, has been banished to a posh allotment shed, or more elegantly, the conservatory! Red cardigan, red trousers - and buckled shoes are in evidence and Bing is reading,.no doubt, a book on potting! I noted, too, that United Artists seem to have pinched one of Decca's little "Bing facial silhouette" symbols alongside the words: BING'S ANNIVERSARY SALUTE TO 50 YEARS OF SHOW HITS.

It was kind, and much appreciated, to see that yours truly as well as the indefatigable LESLIE GAYLOR get mention on the sleeve; this will undoubtedly be the means of bringing more "loners" - thinking they were the last left! - into the Circle.

What has been said here, as inferred above, will not one whit affect any members of our Circle. They will buy the album with advice from NO ONE; and they will treasure it. As well they might; only in these privileged pages do we permit ourselves the luxury of "pulling it to pieces", so to speak. The over-riding consideration - and delight - is that Bing is not only recording still, in fine style - he's doing it here in Britain which contains some of the loyalest fans in the world. Indeed, the album is emblazoned: NEWLY RECORDED IN LONDON. And that's wonderful.

---

and..... JOHN MARSHALL, of Teddington, he of the off-beat - and irrepressible - humour! as those who get in touch with him will know (39 Kings Road, Teddington, Midd'x)...John was left in one of the most astonishing domestic situations one could possibly image...I get a certain reticence on some of the things I hear because they are so personal even while reflecting credit on the writer. I do not intend to be mysterious but John really is quite a character. Now, suddenly he has acquired a guitar and is teaching himself not only to strum the chords but to play countermelodies! And that's not all: he's writing and composing songs! And even THAT'S not all - he's singing 'em himself! These, for a change, are not Crosby numbers....more the Miki and Griff type of melodious numbers...indeed, having heard some of them I've recommended him to get in touch with those two singers.

....MORE I.C.C. PEOPLE....like Edward Hale of Highbury Hill in London, a very kind and obliging man for sure who works tirelessly.... and finds himself the owner of one of the famous Crosby golfing caps (quite how we'll not divulge just in case the Bing office has to turn to cap-distributing!) Edward has designed, and executed in gold silk, a quite unique "star" incorporating the letters BING to commemorate Mr. Crosby's 50 years in show business. I have pictures of it and it looks a minor work of art. Bing has been acquainted with this effort and has said he will be glad to take possession of it at the Palladium. Edward thus emulates Dave Smith of Newcastle who presented Bing with a plaque at Chappells in London last year. One cannot help wondering just how many of these lovingly and painstaking "souvenirs" Bing now possesses. Incidentally, I hope Edward won't mind me revealing that he shares his tremendous interest in Bing with his mother....to more of our members in a similar position have, sadly, recently lost their mothers - in each case it had been hoped they would attend the Palladium.....that's life...two expeditions to London's famous theatre will thus be that bit lonelier.....

GETTING ONE'S PRIORITIES RIGHT: I swear this is true: a member had a phone call from another, which ran something like this:

"Thought I'd let you know my tickets have come thro' from the Palladium! Great, we're all set now...what a night its going to be...can hardly wait! Have you got yours? Good....perhaps we'll see you...Cheers for now....oh, by the way, the wife had a bit of a bump in the car yesterday..nothing much. Seems to have sprained her ankle and strained her shoulder...car's got the wing banged in, so we'll be going down by train..but we'll be there all right!"

That's life....again! And with Edward donning his golfing cap and having his photograph taken so that he gives a fair impression of Bing...one might weakly ask:

Where's it all gonna end?

BY
BERT BISHOP.

BING ON THE BOX - be it radio or TV.....

WHEREIN BERT CHRONICLES FOR POSTERITY IN HIS OWN INIMITABLE STYLE THE APPEARANCES OF BING - OR BING-INTEREST PROGRAMMES - DURING THE PAST QUARTER.

One has the overwhelming feeling that with the tremendous events pending consequent on another Summer of Bing in Britain, and the Palladium appearances, this feature is almost certain to be one of the largest in the next issue of BING!

There comes, we might say, a pregnant pause pending those inevitable guest appearances, interviews and so on. But this is not to say that the past quarter has been a Bing-less one by any means - especially in the States - and, in fact, there have been some interesting items.

> But firstly we'd better answer so many correspondents who, not unnaturally, are asking: What happened to the proposed BBC "season" of Crosby films? Well, we know it has been put off several times since last Christmas - but not abandoned. Word is that it will certainly materialise. This summer seems a likely time - but we have no concrete news as this issue is printed.

Not the least interesting of the radio programmes, however, was SOUNDS INTERESTING (Radio 3, 10.45 to 11.35pm 28 March last) during which two tracks from the forthcoming BING VIEJO LP were played. The programme is described as a "weekly look at the world of popular music" and is presented by Derek Jewell who visited Bing in Mexico and whose story of that visit appears elsewhere in this issue. Bing presented him with a first copy of an album "he recorded a couple of months ago which isn't out yet in America or Britain. Jewell introduced the two tracks from this Latin-American LP with the observation that Bing's voice was a little deeper and that his ability to sustain a note not quite what it was - "but for the rest, masterful in style". We knew all about this album, of course, and it was most interesting to hear this very early "preview" of two of the tracks.

As on the SOUTHERN MEMOIR album, we have as accompaniment an orchestra led by Paul Smith. The arrangements we heard on these tracks were not so diverse as the earlier LP and, generally, were more in keeping with the songs' basic origins, though still a long way from the lush strains of Latin-American music more usually conjured by accoustic guitars and strings with mariachi trumpets added their soft, harmonious, tones. Indeed, the first number MARIA BONITA has strong influence of "the big brass band from Brazil" - and there are those among us who will recall a line or two from THAT song which suggests that it sounds much better the further back you stand! A thumping, trendy "Mexican" backing which seems determined to crash in on Bing, who takes the lyric through twice, first in English then in Spanish, in fairly forceful style to which the adjective "masterful" is best not added by comparison with other recent recordings. After the final Paul Smith piano roll has died away there is a cry of "Bueno!" from Bing...just the kind of comment he makes in rehearsals, in recordings, even, and it will be interesting to hear if this natural verbal ejaculation is retained in the commercially-released album. We must wait and hear...

For GREEN EYES, the second number, the accompaniment IS far more sympathetic and subdued and supports a much better piece of vocalising by Bing. The time and tempo of this song is such it flows along, and without any rapid rises and falls within, or above and below, the stave. A situation, we might remark, which is noticeably more comfortable for Bing. Again the song is presented in two languages, which is in-

dubitably the pattern of the entire album.

> By the presentation of these two tracks by the BBC a quaint situation could arise for it is quite likely that there was a breach of copyright involved - but that, of course, would be a matter between them and the Decca Record company, which will be issuing the L.A. album. In fact, it may be necessary to make a third return to KEEPING TRACK should it appear before this issue is complete.

BOB HOPE - 25 YEARS IN TELEVISION - BBC2 17 March (70 mins. from 9pm) marked the British presentation of the much-publicised special anniversary programme from which there was, naturally, no way of excluding Bob's most famous "partner". Their verbal jousting, duetting, and hoofing have attained such a permanent niche in world entertainment that audience expectancy demands Hope and Crosby; or the other way about.

In fragmented clips from Bob's TV years many stars were presented, with John Wayne, Frank Sinatra and Bing attending the shennanegins by personal appearance as well. Initially there was a clip from the opening of the New Madison Square Gardens Theatre, where Bob sparred with Rocky Marciano in, literally, a knockabout routine. Bing, of course was the "referee" finally falling victim to the famous "pat-a-cake" routine executed by Bob and Rocky. It will be recalled that Hope has boxed in his time under the name of Packy East...or as he now tells it, Rembrandt Hope - "I spent so much time on the canvas."

The finale of the programme built up with Bing joining Bob on stage; after a short clip from ROAD TO BALI - the song - with the film's three personality ingredients, they indulged in some humorous bandinage concerning Bob's quarter-century of small screen entertaining. Ever ready to dismiss the event as Bob's "farewell appearance", Bing was not allowed to leave before a third, and very entertaining clip from a show with Bob from the Waldorf Astoria of a few years back was shewn. For most this would surely have been the highlight of the entire show. Bing and Bob, looking quite immaculate in top hat, white tie, tails and cains gave a monumental medley comprising each other's songs. Bing opened with BUTTONS AND BOWS; then the pair of them went through PLEASE, SWINGING ON A STAR, THANKS FOR THE MEMORY, WHITE CHRISTMAS. These songs were not performed, of course, without being well punctuated with jibes and cracks at one another's expense. The medley was rounded off with, inevitably, PUT IT THERE PAL! with up-dated lyrics and a slightly changed melody in places! The show ended on this exceptionally high note and the pair have seldom been seen to better effect.

> Those up reasonably early on Saturday, 10 April - well, by 8.02am at least - and listening to the BBC's Radio 4 programme TODAY at that time, will have heard our own knowledgeable member from Wembley, JOHN BIGNELL, in a discussion programme during which John Fisher's book, CALL THEM IRREPLACEABLE (reviewed by the same John Bignell in this issue) was under analysis. Those analysing were the programme's host, Paul Barnes, John Fisher himself, Paul Gambachini (compiler of a book on a character named Elton John) and - John.

John was brought into the discussion after the playing of a few bars of Bing's 1945 recording of WHERE THE BLUE OF THE NIGHT, and proceeded in most able fashion to sum up Bing's appeal and achievements quite concisely within the irksome time limit imposed - seldom long enough in this type of programme to really air facts, leave alone adequate opinions and discussions thereon. John is not a seasoned performer; indeed, he was somewhat startled to be called upon to represent the "Crosby faction". Nevertheless, he did very well and acquitted himself most ably altho' from the urgency apparent it was plain that he was very conscious of the time-limit that was being imposed on him by the host.

> John, on being asked what was Bing's appeal, summed up Bing's far-ranging attractions by noting that Bing is "not one singer, but about twelve singers in one" as evidenced by the sheer scope of his varied recordings; and that Bing has become an internationally loved and respected figure by his genuine humility. It is a safe bet that after the programme John was kicking himself

that he hadn't said so-and-so, or even so-and-so....it happens to everyone! But, it is felt that John put his finger on Bing's endearing durability and struck a good note.

> John was then asked if he played Bing's records every day...and answered in the affirmative: "Naturally!"....up-tempo tunes to "start the day right" and something perhaps a little more relaxing for late-night listening. Asked the impossible question of selecting a favourite Bing record, John nominated the 1931 version of WRAP YOUR TROUBLES IN DREAMS. Unfortunately this was NOT played (as mentioned elsewhere too in this issue - producers don't like turning up records not absolutely to hand!) - and perhaps it isn't John's permanent answer! John is sure to be like the rest of us and find it impossible to pin down just one Crosby record as a No. 1 favourite.

John Fisher, the author, adding in the broadcast to what he had said about Bing in his book, noted that Bing was the first person in the history of popular music to make the melody subsidiary to mean: "He underlined the words...when we talk about words and music....a conversational ease in the way he is putting the words across."

> Paul Gambachini just had to observe that Bing's WHITE CHRISTMAS is still the Number One song in terms of record sales; but our John was quick to make the very good point that it is a great pity that more attention is not given to some lesser-played songs from Bing's recorded repertoire rather than the same old "favourites". It would be nice to think that this producer, and others, took the point.

As a special tribute to the twelve artists featured in Fisher's book, Sammy Cahn played and sang an especially written lyric to his famous song from which the book's title is taken. It came across as a genuinely endearing dedication by Sammy with which to close the discussion.

The early evening film, Wednesday 14 April (BBC 1) was the last (to date!) of the ROAD films - the one made in England at Shepperton in 1961, ROAD TO HONG KONG. Most will agree that this effort fell short of the previous six in the series but, conversely, such have been the disparaging remarks that have attended this film that it has come as quite pleasantly entertaining to not a few who did not see it originally. Its biggest merit, it has been suggested, was that it enabled many admirers to meet Bing while it was being made!

For the most part it is overloaded with guest spots and I state categorically that, attractive though Joan Collins may be - undoubtedly is - there was absolutely no reason why Dottie Lamour, the legendary third member of the famous triumvirate in the ROAD films, could not have carried the same role as the British actress rather than being reduced to the miniscule role of playing herself in what was itself a glorified guest spot. The duet TEAM WORK is far and away the best song from the film, and Bing's only ballad, LET'S NOT BE SENSIBLE (duetted with Joan Collins) not likely to be one of his best remembered film songs. Worth re-iterating is the fact that for the soundtrack LP of the film, Mike Sammes of the famous Singers was called in to sing the final word of the song - "love" - because owing to the dramatic situation, or shall we say "clinch", Bing did not sing it and thus failed to finish the song! Its quite cleverly dubbed in, but detectable.

STARS ON SUNDAY for 2 May may have surprised many for it carried a repeat of Bing's reading from the gospel of St. Mark, Chapter 10, verses 1 to 16, which was originally shewn on 12 October 1975. There was an entirely different programme of guests, and indeed, a different host in the person of Robert Dougal, but Bing's contribution was identical - and just as welcome and interesting.

On the same day, 2 May, there began on radio a three-part programme on Al Jolson called YOU AIN'T HEARD NOTHIN' YET. Max Bygraves was the storyteller and among the many voices heard was that of Bing. His contributions, however, were culled from his own 14-week series when he talked of Jolie in the course of it.

Meanwhile, over in the States, Bing has been seen and heard to good effect in several shows - Johnny Carson's TONIGHT, THE RICH LITTLE SHOW, and with Bob Hope in Montreal to support the Olympic Games Appeal and no doubt other programmes, too. While it is very nice to hear about these shows across the Atlantic it is not possible, of course, to review them without SEEING them. In this respect may I suggest, indeed, offer a cordial welcome to some Stateside or Canadian member to kindly contribute an appropriate column detailing these appearances? I'm sure it would be well received over here.

Editor: Yes indeed, we would welcome a regular Stateside review of Bing's appearances there on the lines of BING ON THE AMERICAN BOX! A quick epilogue to some of Bert's comments: I have a slight chill around the heart reading of the Mexican accompaniments - I didn't hear the 2 tracks via the BBC.....the Bob Hope 25th TV anniversary was great entertainment though, inevitably, "bitty"...excerpts always must be, I suppose. But that duet of Bing and Bob in immaculate evening dress was terrific I thought. Two talking points next day from acquaintances concerned Bing and Bob - and the unbelievable change in a certain singer who shall be nameless! The years are kind to some; they're grossly cruel to others - and one feels it must be a burden to some performers to see themselves on the screen as they were only a few years back.

I caught John Bignell's broadcast - and warmly congratulated him on the way he put his points. He informed me, crestfallen, that he had had every intention of getting in a "plug" for the ICC and its members....no matter, John. You did well.

And, odd that Bert Bishop should throw out an invitation to trans-Atlantic members, for in a few lines we will be able to present some first-hand accounts of Bing's appearances in America and Canada.

Is Bing here yet? Everyone was asking the same question, with Julie Andrews already in her 2nd week at the Palladium and Bing due next Monday....so, we were answered on JUNE 15: our local evening paper, THE SOUTH WALES ARGUS, carried this lovely item:

> BING ARRIVES IN LONDON.
>
> The Old Groaner flew into London today to start a 14-concert tour of Britain and Ireland, and said that he planned to carry on working for ever.
>
> Bing Crosby, 72, arrived at Heathrow with his wife Kaythryn and his three children, Mary-Francis, Nathaniel, and Harry, and said: "I WOULD NEVER CONSIDER RETIRING. I THINK I WOULD GET TOO BORED."

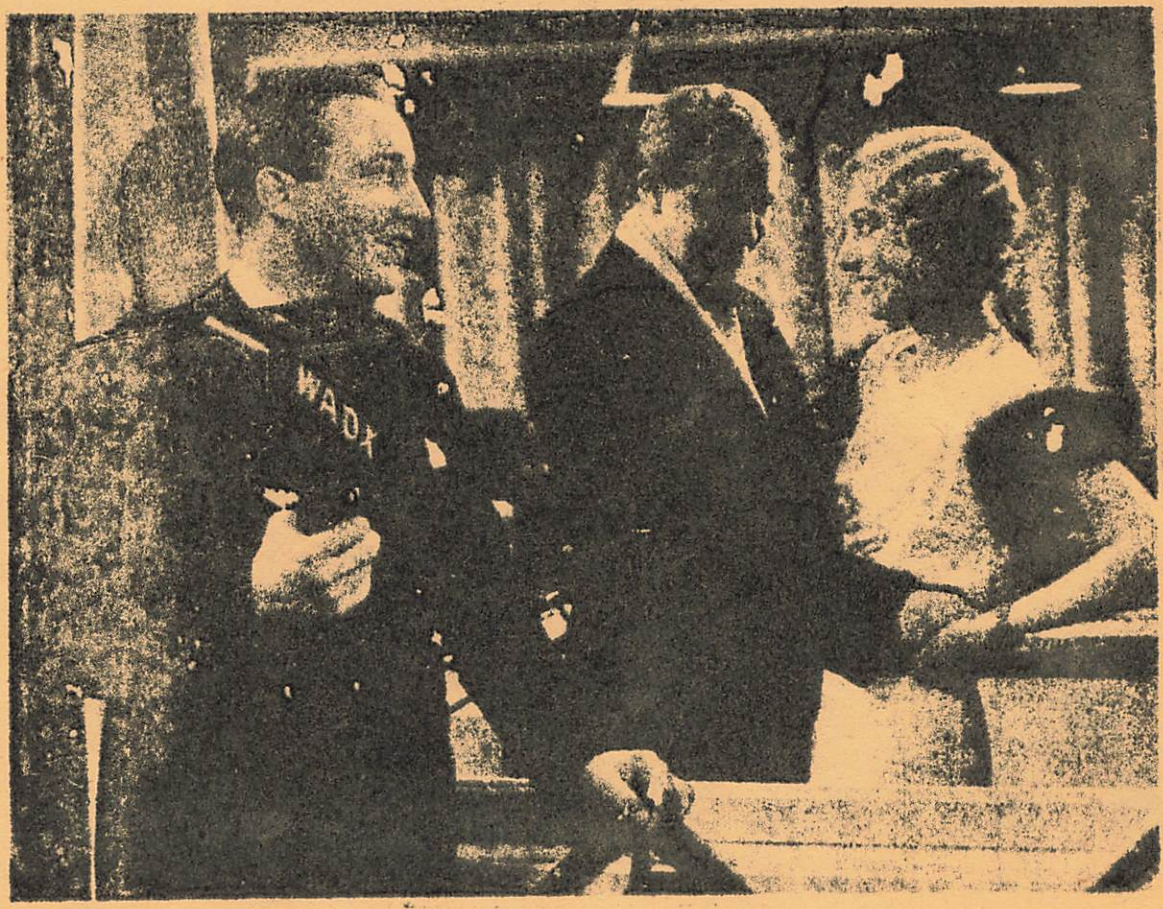
Which is not only splendid news - it also obviates the hypocrisy of annual "farewell" appearances! That most idiotic of exercises. And naturally, we hope this fantastic 2-weeks is indeed the prelude to more regular visits.

On the opposite page there are two pictures we had to use, despite the difficulties - not to mention the lack of clarity! We've already told of Bury St. Edmunds members, GEORGE AYLMER and his win of an Olympic Games trip to Montreal - George still looks somewhat startled as well as delighted!

The other picture is really historic: it explains itself in the caption. It was the first real sight of Bing we had in this country. What days! When Bing was in this famous film - never dug out for TV by the way - singing PLEASE, DINAH, SHINE..... It will certainly bring back vivid memories of Bing's fantastic impact in 1932. It would be wonderful to see this film again. I wonder if copies still exist? No doubt our film "buffs" could enlighten us.

Grocer George Aylmer wonders what's in store after reading a telegram informing him of his win. Sharing the excitement are shop assistants Margaret Plummer (left) Marjorie Scott and Joy Frost (right) who, he says, helped him win.

The Big Broadcast, 1932, with Bing Crosby, Stuart Erwin, Leila Hyams. Soon after the beginning of the talkies, radio started to cannibalize Hollywood talent. It offered stars huge sums for brief appearances on the air, to the great distress of movie exhibitors who claimed that people would rather stay home and hear their favorites than pay to see as well as hear them. Soon the screen returned the compliment, beginning with *The Big Broadcast*, which made a star of crooner Bing Crosby and also featured such radio personalities as Kate Smith, the Boswell Sisters, the Mills Brothers, Burns and Allen, and Arthur Tracy, the Street Singer.



MEETING BING - in MONTREAL by ICC member JEAN PAUL FRERERAULT.

For weeks the town was plastered with advertisements:

THE BOB HOPE SPECIAL
starring in person
BOB HOPE BING CROSBY
Freddie Prinze Lynn Anderson.
THE LES BROWN ORCHESTRA
plus
Surprise Guests and Celebrities
Monday April 12 ---- 8pm.
at the
air-condition MONTREAL FORUM.

So, this it seemed, was MY chance...after all, they were coming up over the Border! And it didn't need much deduction to realise that Bing was going to be "in town" at the latest by 11 April. Sunday was that day and I judged it time to make a reconnaisance downtown. "Jump in the car," I said to the wife, "we're gonna find Bing!"

I decided the logical course was to try the likeliest hotels - but things didn't go so well. Driving down Decarie Boulevard at around 60, I suddenly hit a pigeon - a real whack it was, too, and somehow I felt it wasn't going to be my day. We reached the Champlain Hotel and I went straight to the information desk enquiring for Bing.

> "Bing is at the Bonaventure .." they told me..so off we went to that hotel. As we were parking the huge garage doors practically crushed our car, stopping just about half-an-inch before impact - which was another heart-stopping moment.

At the desk of the Bonaventure the enquiry girl acted in an astounding way - made me feel I was in a "spy thriller". She absolutely refused to tell us anything about Mr. C. -even that he was in fact staying there. She actually said the information was "classified"! would you believe?

I explained that I was a life-long admirer of Bing, was a member of his society, had thousands of records, and so on. And she seemed quite unmoved at my earnestness. Finally, I had no alternative but to admit defeat and turn disappointedly away. And as I was walking away, she called me back:

"BING IS IN ROOM 1122!" she said, quite out of the blue.

Thanking her, I hurried to the house phone and called his room. His secretary answered and told me Bing wouldn't be back until 1600 hours - it was then noon so I had time to return home and pick up some Crosby literature, records, &c. I was ready to return to the Bonaventure - and my wife mentioned she was tired and didn't feel like returning to town. So I called my son-in-law and he was most certainly interested. Back at the hotel we waited near 1122 with no sign of Bing. I called the room again on the phone and the same secretary told me they were expecting Bing any moment now - but it would be impossible to see Bing without contacting a Mr. Leo Lynn! Hmmmm...signs still not good, but I'd been waiting 40 years to meet Bing and this was no time to give up.

But it got to 1815 and there was still no sign of him and we were getting discouraged. We left the eleventh floor and went down to the main lobby again and were diverted for a while by the Montreal Ice Hockey team waiting for their cars.... but another 10 minutes passed and spirits were at a low ebb...when a limousine pulled up - a Caddilac actually - and two men stepped out, one of them wearing a straw hat.

Yes, it was Bing - at last. We beat them to the elevator, certain that's where they were making for...and thus the four of us - Bing, my son-in-law, me and this fourth chap - were in the elevator soaring upwards. .I introduced myself - and son-in-law and Bing was most affable....and do you know, it wasn't until that moment that I realised the fourth member was Bob Hope! "Bob Hope too!" I exclaimed, horrified that in my concentration on Bing I had until then completely missed him.

"Who's Bob Hope?" growled Bing in that so-familiar style

I managed quite a chat with Bing, welcoming him to Montreal. We had got so envious of the UK people and their stories of how they had got to meet Bing - and now, amazingly, it was our turn in Canada. But what a life - for Bing! In a few minutes he apologised but said they just had to get moving for they were due at a banquet in town that was being laid on for them.

We had a merry ride home, looking back on the day's events and their rewarding conclusion. Next day, of course, we went to the show at the Forum - but before doing so attempted to see Bing again in his dressing-room. Unlike Britain, it seems, guards were everywhere and all doors were locked....still, we asked here and there and suddenly, and amazingly, we were in Bing's dressing-room. We had some autographs - on Bing's books - and I asked him what his future plans were? He replied that he might be going to London to make a movie with Bob and there were one or two other things cooking (the Palladium, no doubt!) but that for the time being he would be spending most of his time with his wife and family. My son took some pictures of Bing and I thanked him warmly before going for my seat for the show.

Bing sang a couple of great songs - WHERE THE MORNING GLORIES GROW and AT MY TIME OF LIFE; then he and Bob did a medley of duets from the ROAD films as well as a comedy sketch

I must tell you from Canada what you already know over there: Bing looked fantastic, and sang tremendously. I thoroughly enjoyed the show, needless to say, though I have only the haziest of memories of anyone else taking part! The show was aired on TV a few days later.

Editor: World-wide coverage by the ICC! Jean Paul, whose address is 1154, Iena Avenue, Chomedy, Ville de Laval, P.Q. CANADA, H7N 3H4, has pictures of the show in colour, 5 x 3 ins. at 50 cents each, about 25p each that is. I imagine Jean Paul was so anxious to get us his story in time - that he omitted to tell us what audience-reaction was in Montreal? Predictable, I am certain.

DOT HARDIMAN runs our counterpart/associate in the States - BINGANG and we're delighted to present her report on:

BING CROSBY AT THE MUSIC CENTER - MARCH 17, 1976.

I am circulating this newsletter of Bing Crosby at the Los Angeles Music Center to avoid reporting it umpteen times in mail and magazines. The concert did not receive any advance publicity and yet it was an instant sell-out. I was one of the lucky ones favoured with a seat by the Crosby office - this honor was later compounded by having my money refunded - and finding myself in a front-row seat. Bing had set aside about 100 choice seats for which he picked up the tab himself - the rest of the proceeds were donated to two of his favorite charities. Leon Lynn told me that 12.50 dollars was the top price that Bing would permit, saying "My show isn't that good."

Other club members (BINGANG and ICC) were the Al Suttons, the Hert Bootmans, the Ted Kaspers, the Kevin Andersons, and John Salisbury. Perhaps there were others but those were the ones I know to have been in attendance.. Gary and Lindsay Crosby with ttheir wives were seated directly behind the above-mentioned group.

Well, there will never be another St. Patrick's Day like it. When I heard that Rosie Clooney, Joe Bushkin, Rich Little, and the Crosby family were also on the bill, I thought perhaps a token appearance by Bing would be likely.....

> INSTEAD, BING KNOCKED HIMSELF OUT FOR OVER TWO HOURS, SINGING SEVERAL MAJOR SOLOS (At My Time of Life, Send in the Clowns, The Way We Were) plus duets with ROSEMARY CLOONEY AND HIS FAMILY, AND CLOSING WITH A MEDLEY OF HIS STANDARDS LASTING ABOUT HALF-HOUR AND THEN STILL BELTING OUT AN ENCORE WITH "THAT'S WHAT LIFE IS ALL ABOUT"!

The pre-program consisted of excerpts from old Crosby radio shows followed by a showing of large screen movie clips (the sound being replaced by background piano accompaniment by Joe Bushkin). ...

> THE NELSON RIDDLE ORCHESTRA BROKE INTO HIS THEME AND BING STROLLED OUT, LIFTING HIS HAND IN THE AIR AND TOUCHING HIS TOE TO HIS FINGERTIP! (try that sometime!) I DOUBT IF HE WOULD HAVE HAD TO DO MUCH MORE FOR THE AUDIENCE WAS ALREADY IN THE PALM OF HIS HAND. JOE BUSHKIN WAS HEARD TO SAY LATER: "FIRST, IT WAS 'OL BLUE EYES IS BACK: THEN SEDAKA IS BACK, AND NOW ITS OLD BOO-BOO-BOO-BOO IS BACK!"

And if Bing had been away, he was definitely back - in every way. The medley portion was vintage Crosby and the entire Music Center, including four tiers of balcony, rose to their feet in an ovation. It happened again when he closed with THAT'S WHAT LIFE IS ALL ABOUT. If there was any question in Bing's mind about the way the American public feels about him, I would think the message was unmistakeable. We were seated directly in front of his stage entrance, and Bing took his closing bows there. He seemed almost dazed by the reception he was receiving, and Kathryn had to motion him out for yet another bow. Mr. Super-Cool appeared to have tears in his eyes.

I'm sure that Bing was literally physically exhausted, and I seriously wonder why he agreed to such a strenuous performance. By not holding back he gave that audience a show they are not likely ever to forget. In my mind, he showed conclusively that there's still no-one remotely near him as a performer.

Priscilla and I had flown down on the noon plane, spending an extremely enjoyable but too brief afternoon with the Kevin Andersons. We flew back to San Francisco on the midnight flight, sitting next to none other than Alan Fisher, the Crosby butler, who had come down for the show with some of the other household staff.

ACCORDING TO ALAN, THIS CONCERT WAS ONLY THE FIRST: BING WILL DO ANOTHER IN THE BAY AREA NEXT MONTH (APRIL) AND A PALLADIUM APPEARANCE IS IN THE WORKS THIS SUMMER.

Editor: We're grateful to Dot Hardiman for this report - a foretaste of what is in store at the Palladium. I have only one other, lame, comment: Who is Sedaka - and more to the point, who is Ol' Blue Eyes?

DID YOU SEE THE PIECE IN THE PAPERS ABOUT BING BEING KEPT OUT OF THE ENCLOSURE AT ASCOT? WAS REPORTED THAT HE TRIED TWO OR THREE GATES, WEARING A STRAW HAT AND A RAINCOAT. HIS COMMENT? BEAUTIFUL, classic Bing: "THOSE GATEMEN SURE KNOW THEIR JOB - KEEPING SCUM LIKE ME OUT!" Another paper reported Bing as saying he "hadn't had time to get togged-up!" Togged up, forsooth - he's getting more British every day. Even allowing for the absurd taboos that surround the Ascot pantomime, I'm willing to gamble there were some red faces among the authorities when they learned that Bing had been kept out.

We have some more American items; among which we've been asked to publicise the follow-

ing:

THE "CLUB CROSBY" OF AMERICA WILL BE HOLDING ITS FIRST CLUB MEETING TO CELEBRATE ITS FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY AND BING'S 50TH ON AUGUST 14-15, 1976. THE MEETING WILL BE HELD IN SAN FRANCISCO AND ANYONE INTERESTED IN ATTENDING SHOULD CONTACT: MISS PATRICIA E. SULLIVAN, SHERIDAN SQUARE APTS., 1301 SHERIDAN AVENUE No. 96, CHICHO, CALIFORNIA 95926, U.S.A.

It is considered this is a message to our American readers who are spread all over the States; but I'm sure if anyone in Britain has the time - not to mention the money - to make the trip they would be welcomed, perhaps honoured, guests! We hope they have a great time, anyway. And here's a delightful story from TIM BROOKS, 1940 80th Street, Jackson Heights, N.Y. 11370, USA: Tim hopes it won't disbar him for ever to serious consideration as a Bing fan:

HOW I WALKED RIGHT BY BING - AND NEVER EVEN NOTICED!

The NBC TV network, for which I work, has been experiencing labor difficulties of late and all office workers with prior experience in studio production have been pressed into service to keep the network on the air during a technician's strike. For my part, I've been working as a cameraman on a daytime "soap opera". This originates in a studio next door to the one from which NBC's TODAY SHOW is telecast.

I didn't know that on this particular morning Bing was to appear on TODAY - if I had, I would have been in the control-room watching!) This program is on from 7-9am. At about 9am I came dragging in, bleary-eyed as usual for me at that hour, to begin work on my show. As I passed down the empty corridor I was vaguely aware of someone passing me in a straw-hat; I thought it a bit unusual but really didn't take a lot of notice.

Only when I got to the studio did I meet the chorus of: "Did you see Bing Crosby outside?" "WHO?" I yelled. "He was charming...had coffee with us, talked a bit, he just came off the TODAY show. He's just left...you must have passed him in the corridor..."

Oh God....but it WAS early.

Tim Brooks also sent us some newspaper cuttings: He said "This is from THE NEW YORK DAILY NEWS, which is a huge circulation tabloid, the biggest I believe in the States. It is rare to have someone on the front page who has not just committed a sensational murder, stolen a million dollars, or perpetrated some other monstrous infamy. Bing, as ever, is the exception!"

The front-page had a large picture of Bing strap-hanging in the New York subway! It has a large caption:

"THAT LI'L OL' STRAPHANGER, BING." The story reads:

How nonchalant can you get? A carload of New Yorkers give nary a tumble as that eminent old crooner, Bing Crosby, rides the subway en route to Aqueduct. One peruses his paper and the others are lost in thought. For more on Bing's day on the town...see inside centerfold: And Bing is hanging onto the strap, back against the swaying train-side - just like the London Underground. Inside the story continues:

BING GOES TO AQUEDUCT TO VISIT HIS MONEY: By Causewell Vaughan.

If you saw Bing Crosby stop in front of St. Patrick's Cathedral yesterday, you no doubt thought that he was filming another movie about the good Father O'Malley, especially since it was Good Friday. But that's not so. Crosby, who won an Oscar for playing Father O'Malley in GOING MY WAY was looking for the road to Aqueduct Race Course Track to pass the time and plunk down a few deuces with hopes of turning them into sawbucks.

Goodness! What would Father O'Malley think? "I don't think he'd mind, " Crosby said

smiling, "I said my prayers in the morning and I was in church on Holy Thursday." Then he dropped the line that every bettor uses when confronted by his wife: - "Anyway, I'm going because its just a sport."

In Crosby's case, that's true. He has more dollars than Minute Maid has oranges, and then some. He also is a horse owner and breeder and doesn't bet very much.

Crosby found the road to the race track a lot more noisy than any scene from his "road" movies with Bob Hope because one leg of it was on the Lexington Ave. subway. Few people recognised him despite his ever-present straw-hat. He said not being recognised on the subway was nothing new.

> "I USED TO HAVE SHOWS AT THE BROOKLYN PARAMOUNT AND THE NEW YORK PARAMOUNT AT THE SAME TIME," HE SAID. "I WOULD TAKE THE SUBWAY BACK AND FORTH AND THERE WAS NEVER ANY TROUBLE."

At the track, among the first people to wave was a cashier at the 100-dollar window. "He must have gotten a promotion, " Crosby said. "That's one window I've never been to."

> He later munched a hot dog, drank beer and checked his programme just like everyone else. That is, until Hall of Fame jockey Frank Colitetti came up to him. After exchanging greetings and reminiscences, Colitetti checked off on Crosby's program the horses he thought would win. "I won't bet the first race, "Crosby said. Colitetti's choice won.
>
> (From The New York Daily News, April 17)

There was a second picture of Bing inside the paper showing him standing at the counter, with his hotdog and beer! "Bing Crosby sustains the inner man during a day at the races" it read.

NORMAN TOOGOOD, 91 Chiltern Green, Millbrook Estate, Southampton had a surprising experience. Norman writes:

Over my many years of Crosby enthusiasm I've noticed many times how often "things Bing" seem to arrive out of the blue when least expected. A few months ago a letter appeared in my local press from a gentleman in the United States who wanted information on a Naval Training Ship that he served on at the turn of the century - he's now in his mid-80s, it turned out. I was able to supply what he wanted and in my letter to him I mentioned that I was always glad to write to anyone in the US - my only other correspondent there being - Bing Crosby. In due course I received a reply which was quite amazing, for this gentleman wrote -

> 'I'm glad you know Bing. I remember when he joined Whiteman, and when The Rhythm Boys were formed. I was working for Whiteman at that time, but with one of his other bands. Whiteman so wanted to be loved by the public but he never did find out what dance music was all about. One time, at Providence, Rhode Island, we played his repertoire but it didn't go. Being in a ballroom we had to play to the public taste. It was the same in the Palaise Royal in New York, which was a very expensive night club. The patrons did not savvy his Dixieland stuff. I'm afraid that with even all his fame and publicity he was kept broke thro' paying some of his men more money than the President of the USA got at that time. When at last he put himself in the hands of a competent agent, commissioned the Rhapsody in Blue and augmented the band to 25 pieces, he found he had to add some comedy relief. He hired one man whose speciality was playing POP GOES THE WEAZLE on a bicycle pump, and Red Stanley played NOLA whilst dancing the Charleston. They were terrific but Whiteman didn't seem to think so. I heard him introduce them many times with: They say they're good - I only hope YOU like them". He liked Bing least of all, but lived to see him become far more famous than he ever was. At the height of his fame Whiteman had the say on which of his bands recorded for Victor, and saw to it that a lot of his unusual acts, including the Rhythm Boys, had

a lot of their material banned from Victor recordings. It was the irony of fate that to boost up the band when it went on the road, he had to employ two men he had previously turned down - the Dorseys. I can say that apart from a few 'legit' players he used on tour, I was personally acquainted with all the great musicians of the Whiteman organisation.'

The writer is Jimmy Lawler, 111 - 4th Street, N.W. Ruskin, Fla. 33570, USA. All this from a completely non-Bing enquiry in our local paper! Whether or not his views on Whiteman are fair or accurate, it does seem quite a coincidence, doesn't it? I am asking him more about the era.

Editor: Certainly a turn-up - but I suspect many of the views expressed. Bing has many times paid tribute to Whiteman as a great bandleader - and acknowledges that if Paul finally sacked him - and the other two Rhythm Boys - he had just cause! It always baffles me when contemporaries try and "write off" Whiteman. His career speaks for itself - and all those great star musicians didn't work for Whiteman because he did NOT know his job. Still, a most interesting letter, and a most interesting contact, from a most unexpected source.

A LETTER FROM GRANVILLE ALLEN, 97 MILL ROAD, NEWTHORPE, NOTTINGHAM WITH A VERY TOPICAL NOTE.....

I remember when Bing's song Gary starred at the Palladium a few years ago. He came onto the stage and his first words were:

"WELL, I'VE BEATEN DAD TO IT!" The audience reacted immediately. They roared, clapped, and cheered and one got the impression they readily appreciated the significance of Gary's words...and hoped thereby, perhaps, to get BING to come. And now he's there....

DICK PEARSON, 45 Park View Road, N.18: I well remember writing and saying I felt HEY JUDE, HEY BING would be Bing's last recording. Its great to be wrong. I note your comments on the SOUTHERN MEMOIR - but I reckoned this the best album of the three new ones - vocally, at any rate. Some of the endings are the best we've had for a long time. When I saw the list of songs on the album I cringed, and lush arrangements would not have worked at all. The songs are too old for anything but the up-tempos that Paul Smith has given them. I can see your point of view and I would actually have preferred the type of backing you mention but to give the album any chance at all I think it has to be the way it is. GEORGIA is a bit hard to take, however! Hope you caught the two tracks from BINGO VIEJO last night...MARIA BONITA shows signs of wear and the passing of time, but I enjoyed GREEN EYES tremendously.

THE MAIN THING, OF COURSE, IS THE GREAT BONUS WE ARE GETTING WITH ALL THESE NEW RECORDINGS AT THIS LATE STAGE, AND SO MANY MORE TO COME. FOR WHAT WE ARE ABOUT TO RECEIVE.....

Editor: And of course, that IS the main thing.....Dick has it in a nutshell. I'm still wondering what he meant, though, about "some of the endings are the best".... no, he couldn't mean in the sense of the man who liked banging his head against the wall because it was so nice when he stopped! Sorry Dick...

I'm sorry for any of our members who work for the Post Office but it is rapidly becoming apparent that the more we pay the less service we're gonna get. The latest blow - and it was a tremendous blow just at the time when we were trying so desperately to redistribute Palladium tickets (see Editorial - was the cessation of collections after around mid-day Saturdays. Failing that, even with first-class mail, letters CAN'T be delivered until the following Tuesday....

TRADING POST

This is the feature wherein, members are reminded, they are welcome to advertise for records wanted and for disposal, tapes, pictures, information, books, etc. etc. There is no charge but long lists of records should be avoided and resort made to inviting enquiries with a SAE. It considerably assists collation of these advertisements if members write them on a separate sheet of paper headed TRADING POST - and ensures their insertion.

In presenting the first of this quarter's items your Editor is reminded of the injunction usually printed on fireworks - "Light the blue touch paper - and stand clear!" Here it is:

Mr. R. McCREA, 27 Harlech Court, Ellesmere Port, Wirral: I have a hard-back copy of Bing's CALL ME LUCKY which I would willingly exchange for pre-War dance band records (with vocals). I also have two copies of THE LISTENER dated 17.4.35 and 25.7.34 if anyone is interested.

Stand by for a rush, Mr. McCrea! CALL ME LUCKY remains very scarce.

TIM BROOKS, 1940 80th Str., Jackson Heights, N.Y.11370, USA: I have a fine condition copy of Bing's album EASY TO REMEMBER (Decca DL 4250) and am willing to trade for another in that series which I don't have such as DL 4252, or DL 4256 and upwards.

Records take about six weeks to reach the US by surface mail; for a single LP, however, air mail isn't a bad proposition and takes a matter of 3-4 days. You will need to refer to the LPography for Tim quotes the American cat. nos. But to save you the trouble, says a kindly Editor, DL 4252 is POCKETFUL OF DREAMS; while DL4256 is HOLIDAY INN, DL 4257 is SWINGIN' ON A STAR; DL 4258 ACCENTUATE THE POSITIVE, DL 4259 is BLUE SKIES. That'll do to be going on with.... the albums are, of course, all of the BING'S HOLLYWOOD series, issued here as BING 1 to 15 inclusive. While on the subject of this mammoth and quite unique issue, readers continue to ask for us to try and push the reissue of these albums. Well, the original issuers, Decca, cannot do it now, and quite frankly, I have doubts that it will ever be reissued in its entirety though, naturally, many of the songs will continue to appear on other sets (WORLD RECORDS "The Very Best of Bing" currently available is a case in point) and albums.

KEITH PARKINSON, 55 Long Ridge, Rastrick, Brighouse, West Yorkshire: I have three sealed copies of the K-TEL Canadian albym SUPER BLOOPERS, side four of which contains the 1939 "Wrap Your Troubles in Dreams" blow-up. The cost of the two-album set is £3 including postage and packing.

A good offer from Keith.

BILL HUNTINGTON, 266 Westminster Rd. Morecambe, Lancs wanted to borrow an LPography in the event of one not being available for sale. He added he would like to borrow it to photo-stat! Hill clearly did not realise what a massive document the LPography is; and he and many others will be especially interested in the announcement else where in this issue concerning its forthcoming reissue in updated form. BUT, meanwhile Bill is also looking for the following albums:

SHILLELAGHS & SHAMROCKS: BING 12 and 13; THAT TRAVELLIN' TWO-BEAT, and OLD MASTERS VOLS. 2 and 3. (I feel fairly certain that the first-named can be obtained from the HMV Record Shop, Oxford Street, London, W.1. The others are not so easily come by.)

(Cont....

The little note in the last issue to the effect that the Editor had a couple of the WINDMILL albums if anyone couldn't get it locally produced something of a landslide - and a considerable extra chore for your Editor! To date, more than SIXTY have been posted to members unable to find it! Naturally, that number wasn't held - actually I had four! - and I spent quite a number of days scouring South Wales for them and in the event no one went short! Its all in a good cause, thank goodness.

But on the subject of that WINDMILL album, it will be recalled that I had reservations about it - and I learn those apprehensions have been well-founded for a member tells me that a colleague of his (not an ICC member) got the record home, played it - and immediately took it back to the shop and demanded his money back! I felt this was very likely to be the reaction of buyers who were unaware of its origin and its decidedly un-satisfactory (in places) reproduction. Air-shots are all very well, and to those "in the know" and tolerant, acceptable. To the ordinary customer however, it could turn him off Crosby albums for good! The fact that this album costs a miserly 79p doesn't alter the fact that people expect good quality on a NEW album, irrespective of its price. It is to be hoped these small independent companies will think hard when issuing dubious-quality air-shots.

On a personal note, I am grateful to the readers, particularly Mrs. Betty Lonnkuist (Glam) and Tony Jones (London,) for fascinating additions to my Paraguayan collection;

ROY BISSELL, 26 Charlotte Rd. Wednesbury, W. Midlands is anxious to acquire back nos. of BING - Nos. 20-30 incl. if anyone can help.

EDDIE ALLAN, 16 Kirk Street, EDINBURGH EH6 5EY has the following for exchange:

LP's OLD MASTERS VOL II AH 17; OLD MASTERS VOL III AH24, Bing and the Dixieland Bands, AH 31; ZING A LITTLE SONG Bing 14; BING & CONNEE LA 8558, Louis Armstrong and Bing Live on Family SFR-DP655, and JAZZIN' BING CROSBY on Joker SM3053.

78s DB1802; DB1843; DB1894; DB1985; DB1990; DB2000; DB2009, DB2036; DB2043, DB2056, DB2085; DB2123 and DB2208.

Brunswick 1434; 01166; 01182; 01531; 01785; 02100, 02313; 02663, 02761; 03633; 03647; 04672; 05181; 05419; 05451.

London HL-R 8504 Capitol 45-CL15761. Eddie's 'wants' are:

"That Towering Feeling" - Vic Damone; "Dinah Yes Indeed" - Dinah Shore - Capitol or WRC., "Springtime in the Rockies" Grable/Dick Powell - Pelican 128; "Little White Lies" Dick Haymes - Decca DL8773, PLUS any KAY STARR LP on Capitol except THE FABULOUS FAVOURITES; "Sentimental Journey" - Doris Day on CBS. Eddie would also accept sheet music portraying certain stars - details on request.

Editor: "That Towering Feeling" Vic Damone? I'm unacquainted with this song - but I can't help wondering if Eddie is referring ON THE STREET WHERE YOU LIVE - a very big number for Vic. Hope I'm not wrong again!

JOHN JOYCE, 5 Shelley Rd., Short Heath, Willenhall, W. Midlands: I desperately need ALAN JONES 78s, tapes and LPs. Would trade generously Bing LPs and 78's, or would pay top prices.

BERT HAMBLETT, 58 Park Rd., Meols, Hoylake, Wirral: I have 14 copies of GOLDEN YEARS which I would like to exchange for 14 copies of BING.

Cont. over...

ROY BISSEEL, address preceding page, has Bing LPs for exchange, Brunswick, Ace of Hearts - what have you? Must be Bing, of course.

DAVE RAPP, 931, Decker Lane, Warminster, PA 18974, USA is anxious to obtain the Ace of Hearts 136 ICHABOD and can offer in exchange a bboice from out of print LPs, special product issues, or 45 releases - all Bing, of course.

BING TAPE FACILITIES: this provides members with the opportunity of acquiring high quality tapes - open-reel orthodox tapes or cassettes - of virtually anything ever sung by Bing Crosby during the course of his epic career be it radio, records, TV and films. Naturally strict legal copyright clauses are applicable to the indiscriminate re-recording in certain fields but these special facilities are available via the ICC without offence to anyone and they are, of course, a particular boon when every effort has been made to obtain a recording without success.

All tapings are fully guaranteed and recorded dual-tracked (if open-reel) with a choice of speed and spool size to suit individual requirements of members. Delivery is usually speedy and certainly within 21 days. Naturally it is hardly realistic to request a taping of just one number - a matter of around three minutes! A suitably sized tape of requirements is fairly easily compiled. Further information - by the way, do NOT ask for tapings of records current available in the shops as this is breaking the law with a vengeance - can be obtained by sending to the following, enclosing SAE:

BOB ROBERTS,
56 THOROLD ROAD,
CHATHAM, KENT.

Newer members may be interested to know that Bob is the member we are proud to have in THE GUINNESS BOOK OF RECORDS as perhaps the most prolific Crosby collector in the world - and Bing is of this opinion, too. Charges are extremely reasonable, especially when compared with commercially pre-recorded tapes &c.

And this great facility does not, of course, preclude members from making their own friendly contacts - near neighbours perhaps - within the Circle when tape-exchanging to mutual benefit can be arranged; your Editor is happy to know that a fair amount of this activity goes on and happy contacts are indeed made via our good offices.

If you would like to know more about THE SINATRA MUSIC SOCIETY (I feel the two middle words are a contradiction in terms) write to MRS. BERYL OVERBURY, 60 Highland Way, Redditch, Worcs. B98 7RH - a jolly lady who will put you in the picture. Beryl loves Bing, too, in case you're doubtful.....

MR. B. MANDERS, 29 Limetree Road, Streetley, Sutton Coldfield, W. Midlands points out that LARRY KINER, 7554 132nd Avenue, N.E. Kirkland, Washington, 98033, USA can supply most of Bing's radio shows (including Jolson and the other prominent guests) 12 shows (Philco, Chesterfield & Kraft) on one 1800ft. open-reel tape for approx. 12 dollars, post paid. By air-mail, too, which takes about 2 weeks. This works out at about 50p per show - a real bargain. Unfortunately, thanks to the slide of the £ there are now less than 2 dollars to it...

Editor: We hope to include details of another LARRY KINER enterprise elsewhere in this issue. Larry can supply the Totems, too, and several other of the independent labels producing Bing records. Send a dollar (50p is near enough!) for his lists.

JACK N. SOUTHER, 2011-44TH AVE. SAN FRANCISCO, CAL. 94116, USA has hundreds of Bing record disposals, U.S. labels, commercial and otherwise, all sizes and speeds; sheet music and books. Has Bing record WANTS on U.S., English and foreign labels. Send lists. Will buy, trade and consider offers. Offers 100 dollars for N- copy of Dorsey Bros. OK41181.

Editor: Well done Jack! You have done what all the politicians haven't done - I just love Jack's .."U.S., English and FOREIGN labels..." More seriously, Jack appears to offer enormous opportunities.

JIM DOUGLAS, 72 McLachlan Str., Larbert, Stirlingshire, FK5 3HN is anxious to obtain what has become an exceedingly rare Bing record: THE FOUR WINDS AND THE SEVEN SEAS. This record never got too widely known. It deserved too, for its got a most philosophical theme and a haunting melody. Anyway, if you have a "spare"...

MARY AND KEN WHITAKER, 148 Montagu Avenue, Oakwood, LEEDS LS8 2RJ feel they are asking the impossible when they say they are anxious to buy BING'S HOLLYWOOD No. 1 to 4, and 6 to 15. Are they? Be nice to show the impossible, or accomplishing it, is second nature to ICC people!

MR. H. BATH, "Little Close", Rickinghall, Nr. Diss, Norfolk is anxious to obtain SHEET MUSIC copies of Bing's popular songs. Secondhand shops can be a fruitful source!

SCOTS WHA' HAE - FOR McBING!

We're not quite sure what the heading means - something like UP THE SCOTS, we think! And things are going to get worse with this devolution thing coming off: already Jimmy Shand's albums are in the FOREIGN SECTION in our record shops! But to get to the point, after the Palladium Bing et famille are off to Scotland for two charity concerts at the Usher Hall, Edinburgh on July 15 and 16 and they will be entitled BING CROSBY AND FRIENDS.

Kathryn will not only take part in these concerts but is also to star for three weeks at the Ochertyre Theatre's production of THE HEIRESS in the heatre near Crieff, Pertshire, and in the Churchill Theatre in Edinburgh. Seems the Crosbys have been frequent visitors to the Ochertyre Theatre, run by Sir William Murray on his 600-acre estate when Bing has been on golfing trips to Gleneagles. It was Bing who suggested the concerts. According to a press report booking for the concerts is by post on a ballot basis. Prices are £10, £7.50, £5, £4 and £3.

Our Glasgow correspondent, JAMES DINEEN, says that the Crosbys are going to be in Scotland for about six weeks and that Bob Hope will also be present as he and Bing were made "honorary patrons" of this little theatre at Ochertyre which holds only around 100 people. There are tons of hotels in the area, says Jim, for anyone who wants to try and see Bing's lovely wife in her stage debut here. James makes the offer to help anyone who wants to get to Scotland - his phone no. 041-946-8740 and his address 42 Melvaig Place, Wyndford Estate, Maryhill, Glasgow, N.W. He has been in touch with the theatre acquainting them with the ICC - and BING mag - in which they seemed most interested. Sir William Murray and Bing are close friends.

Seems our Scottish friends are going to have even more opportunity to see Bing and the family than those down South. Such a gesture by Bing in giving these concerts is a massive gesture of affection for the people of Britain - for as all will know, all the "takings" both from the Palladium and the Scottish venture are for charities or the arts. What, I wonder, if Bing planning for Ireland?

LINES FROM LESLIE

..LESLIE GAYLOR of the Isle of Wight, of course - our best-known publicit!

Like many of us, Leslie's dream of Bing appearing in Britain has been accompanied by something like a nightmare! Mail, too, has hit Leslie from all angles....Leslie write

Yes indeed, I've been snowed under with letters, phone calls, telegrams - and personal visits. I made a visit early on - as soon as the Palladium news 'broke' - to try and see Mr. Robert Paterson of International Entertainments, who is putting on the show. Like others, however, I failed to see him but spoke to his secretary and deputy. I left with a note that if we could get in our requests by the 21st April (this was on the 17th!) accompanied by a SINGLE cheque, tickets would be made available. But I'd already told them that such an administrative task was beyond us especially as Easter covered the four days mentioned! And we had no facilities for possibly the transmission of funds up to many thousands of pounds at such short notice. However, things did start working out as a result of the efforts made by the leading members of ICC.

You will probably be interested in a letter I had from Bing, dated 23rd April which among other things says:

> Thanks for the news about our forthcoming Palladium visit and the recording news and the information about the release of the albums... things are shaping up for the Palladium visit. I think we'll have a pretty good show. The trouble is getting all the children together for rehearsals because Mary Frances is in Texas and Harry is in Los Angeles and Nathaniel is busy with his golf. Kathryn works every day on TV here, so we're going to have to get started pretty soon to put something together.
>
> ....we have a big problem with the tickets. It might be impossible to take care of everybody in the clubs and still allow the public an opportunity to buy some tickets, too....I'll be looking forward to seeing you...
>
> BING".

Still, as you will have read by the Editor, it does seem that most of our members have got their tickets; the advice given (to write immediately to the Palladium) was the soundest, indeed, the ONLY advice once the newspaper story came out. I'm fairly certain that those who acted quickly got tickets.

I attended the reception given to launch John Fisher's book and enjoyed the company of Ken Barnes, Alan Warner (United Artists), Richard Drewitt and the author. It was also a pleasure to meet that great admirer of Bing, our member John Bignell (and his wife) who has reviewed the book, CALL THEM IRREPLACEABLE, in this issue. And I came away with an autographed copy of the book. Prior to going to the reception, however, I called in to see Alan Warner and he played for me the tracks of THE ONLY WAY TO GO and SPRING WILL BE A LITTLE LATE THIS YEAR. They sounded a couple of beauties to me.

The album made in London of the show tunes (at the same time as THAT'S WHAT LIFE IS ALL ABOUT) will be with you by now; this album is being advertised on London's famous red double-decker buses and it seems it will be impossible to escape the name of Bing this summer in London - and that's provided anybody WANTS to! Whatever reactions are to the album - we know how the diehards dissect any Bing recordings with the best of intent! - we must all be grateful and delighted that Bing is so prominently on the record scene and let's say again how grateful we are to Ken Barnes, Pete Moore, and United Artists.

Incidentally, long-time members may recall that some years ago Larry Crosby sent me an extract from his (so far) unpublished book in which he stated singers "needed to be warned". He was referring to his belief that "the accompaniment should always enhance the voice and never, never, cover it." Wise words, of course

I had a nice letter from NIGEL HUNTER who wrote the sleeve notes for the MFP album, WHERE THE BLUE OF THE NIGHT. He told me it was not the intention to use the 1931 recording of the title number but the later 1945 version. Unfortunately, as Bert Bishop has no doubt observed, the error was discovered too late! But my main feeling about this very acceptable album was regret that they had omitted that lovely number, ON THE ALAMO.

> In reply to many correspondents, Ken Barnes will be recording one or more of the Palladium shows for LP release - and ATV will be tele-recording it for future television screening. Those who got there will have the pleasure of seeing it again in their own homes; more important, those who missed it will thereby get some consolation. But I think, and hope, the latter will be a very small minority by the time things have worked out.

I suppose we must admit that Parkinson has "done" Bing pretty well with the two great shows and there would be little point in a third. But no doubt Bing will be seen on TV here during his lengthy visit. You will have seen the second showing of the Vera Lynn show. Was it my fancy or did it seem even better on the second showing? I felt that it did.

I was delighted to get the impression that despite the Editor's strictures on the arrangements and the playing of them re A SOUTHERN MEMOIR most members like this album. Incidentally, it was erroneously stated in the last issue that perhaps London Decca would have mixed the tapes to better effect. Actually, the mixing WAS done in London!

Knowing that so many members are irked that a lot of Bing's finest records never seem to get reissued I have been in touch with MCA and got the following interesting reply:

Dear Mr. Gaylor,

Thank you for your very detailed letter of April 10. I have looked through the list you enclosed with great interest and there is every chance that we will incorporate some of the titles you mention that never got re-issued when we are compiling future Crosby albums.

I CAN ASSURE YOU THAT WE HAVE PLANS FOR SEVERAL RE-ISSUES OF BING'S MATERIAL IN THE NEXT YEAR.

Thank you once again for your interest. Yours sincerely, PETER ROBINSON,
U.K.Manager.
1 June 1976

This must be of especial interest to members; a favourite subject of correspondence to me and Editor Reg concerns the songs that are favourites of ours but have remained on 78s - very elusive now. It will be most interesting to see what eventuates from MCA in the months to come. I feel certain that, apart from anything else they will want to contribute to the Crosby Rennaisance now running so high. And in any case, they have access to vast stocks of Crosby masters.

Finally, I want to assure members that I and all leading members of the ICC have done everything possible to enable members to get tickets for the Palladium shows. My mail - like the Editor's - was being delivered in packages secured by heavy rubber bands! It has been a worrying and expensive time: but all assistance on all sides willingly given to try and assist members to attend the historic concerts.

Editor: No one can possibly doubt that Leslie works absolutely tirelessly for the cause. I am not exactly idle - and I do "do " the magazine largely! - but I marvel at the amount of mail he gets thro' - you see, even in the midst of the Palladium upheaval he's sending lengthy and detailed lists of songs for potential albums to MCA! Leslie will not mind me saying, too, that he is quite an "ordinary British workman"; how he manages to finance his mail and his constant trips to London is quite a mystery. Truly he devotes most of his time - and perhaps all of his money!

BING LETTERS

REG BRISTO,
7, Greenmeadow Close,
CWMBRAN, GWENT.
NP4 3NR.

At the rate letters come in there is no need to remind members that letters are welcome! Writers should bear in mind, however, that if they do NOT want their letters published, or their names and addresses, will they make that clear?

ALSTON W. SUTTON, 1071 Perkins Way, Sacramento, CA 95818, USA: We have been so envious of you Englanders for all of Bing's appearances - but at last we are catching up! In October (1975) Bing appeared at Treasure Island (San Francisco site of the 1939 World's Fair, now a Naval station) in a radio re-creation of "Command Performance", a recorded series for the military during the World War II - and we were able to attend, hear, see and MEET Bing. In December, a select group were able to witness and enjoy Bing's show for the patients of the Laguna Honda Home at San Francisco - a show Bing and his family have kept going for the last 12 years or so. In January, of course, the Pro-Am (Golf) at Pebble Beach, and as at Laguna Honda, Bing made himself available to club members for greetings and personal chats. Then in March we had the Los Angeles concert. Mrs. S. and I sat immediately in front of Gary and Lindsay Crosby and their ladies, and visited with them during the intermission. Priscilla Koernig and Pat Sullivan sat with Rich Little, when he wasn't on stage; and Herb Bootman (U.S. ICC member) was taken in to Bing's dressing room by Leo Lynn at the end of the show, while the rest of us were talking with Nathanial, Douglas Fairbanks Jr., and lesser fry.

Bing and his family haven't been this available here on the coast for decades. And - he truly sounds better each time you hear him. Better, Better! And looks fine - so it isn't just the change of climate when he goes to England that keeps him going!

Best regards to all British members - and keep the magazine coming!

PS: Wonder if Bing will have Rosemary Clooney, Rich Little, Joe Bushkin and Herb Ellis as guests in England? If so, you're in for a treat for they work very well with Bing.

Editor: Alston's notepaper is printed: ANOTHER CROSBY COLLECTOR! And we pinched his idea for our envelope-greeting. As you will read elsewhere, Canada as well as America have been getting in on the act with Bing! The artists mentioned will indeed be with Bing in London.

JAY FENTON, 422 Houston Str., Washington, PA. 15301, USA: Did you know about the BROAD CHANNEL DAY CAMP LP with Bing singing along with the children's camp chorus? You seem to have many reissues of Bing in England which we cannot get here in America. All we seem to be able to get are your British rock groups....

Editor: Did we know about the LP? Or is it new? Ken Barnes told us how "difficult" the record scene is in America; of how the big companies are totally sold on - pardon the expression - "hard rock music".

JOE SINNOTT, 44 Spaulding Lane, Saugerties, N.Y.12477, USA: So glad for you fellows that you'll get a great show in person from Bing. Sure wish Bing would do an LP with the Mills Brothers and one with Vera Lynn before he calls it a career. Just love his new "Children". He was great on the MONTREAL SHOW as I've sure you've heard.

Editor: Suggrsted LPs have our undivided support; yes, Jean Paul Frererault describes the Canadian show for us in this issue.

JACK LISTER, 1 Harley Bank, Low Bentham, Lancaster: Further to the WHITE CHRISTMAS-WITH-A-VERSE THEME, I feel I must tell you I have today received a letter from a Canadian member - Jean Paul Frereault. How good it is to have tangible proof of the world-wide interest and existence of the "Circle". Jean Paul refers to my piece in issue 41 and offers to send me a copy of his tape from the HOLLYWOOD PALACE TV show of Dec. 18, 1968 on which Bing rendered WHITE CHRISTMAS complete with the verse. I have, naturally, accepted his offer with sincere gratitude. I do feel this merits mention as a reminder to readers overseas that we do consider them to be an integral part of The Circle.

Editor: So happy to oblige, as Bing said to Johnny Mercer; Jean Paul is well known to us - and like so many Crosby people, ever-ready to help. But this doesn't, of course, answer Jack's original assertion that he had a 78 of Bing with this elusive verse to WHITE CHRISTMAS.

Our Irish readers felt aggrieved that of all the "I met Bing!" stories towards the latter end of 1975 there were no accounts used of their encounters. We're happy to make good that omission:

NEIL HUNTER, 50 Ravenswood Park, Belfast BT5 7PT: I don't know whether or not Barry Adams or Noel Mould wrote you regarding the wonderful hours we spent with Bing on Turnberry golf course, but you can take it from me, it was certainly a day to remember! Five of us set sail from Larne (Co. Antrim) at 7.30am on a beautiful July morning (the 5th to be precise) en route for Stranraer.

We took one of our cars aboard the ferry and this in turn conveyed us fairly quickly to the seaside venue where Bing and his partners were in the early stages of their charitable stint. My first-ever glimpse of the great man is something I'll never forget.... I could hardly believe that I was actually breathing the same air and that a hope I had cherished since boyhood was being fulfilled. He was attired in red, or pink, with a yellow hat in striking contrast, and looked exactly as I had pictured he WOULD look.

We wasted no time in getting close to him and engaging him in a running conversation which continued for hours as he made his way around that very long course - which he seemed to do with consummate ease and scarcely a sign of fatigue. And it was a very humid day.

> Bing was in great spirits and full of conversation. Now and again he treated us to SWEET LEILANI, or PENNIES FROM HEAVEN, and remarked that the few snatches he sang of the latter would cost us a "dollar and a half!" This was indeed the Crosby of my imagination, the most relaxed person I've ever encountered.

We got all the autographs we required, plus pictures of, and with, Bing. It was a successful and, needless to say, quite memorable day for us.

Editor: We'll be assailed again perhaps for being too "fannish" - but what the heck, members like to hear of other members' meetings with Bing. And its a safe bet there's going to be plenty more of them this year.

And indeed, NOEL MOULD, following the broad-brush picture painted by Neil Hunter, took a smaller brush and painted in some of the finer points of the visit to Turnberry by the Irishmen: Noel wrote:

Crossing the Irish Sea that glorious July morning - beautiful dancing sunshine days must henceforth be Crosby days! - I thought that I would be a most Lucky fella if I just SAW the great man. The leprechauns were on our side: I not only saw Bing, but as it turned out that lovely day outdid all my expectations.